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# The First Principle in Late Neoplatonism

*A Study of the One's Causality in  
Proclus and Damascius*

*By*

Jonathan Greig



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Funding: ERC project, 'NeoplAT' (ERC\_CoG\_771640), begun 2019.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Greig, Jonathan, author.

Title: The first principle in late Neoplatonism : a study of the one's causality in Proclus and Damascius / by Jonathan Greig.

Description: Leiden ; Boston : Brill, [2021] | Series: Philosophia antiqua : a series of studies on ancient philosophy, 0079-1687 ; volume 156 | Revision of author's thesis (doctoral)—Universität München, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020030423 | ISBN 9789004439054 (hardback) | ISBN 9789004439092 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Proclus, approximately 410-485. | Damaskios, approximately 480-approximately 550. | Causation. | First philosophy. | One (The One in philosophy) | Neoplatonism.

Classification: LCC BD531 .G74 2021 | DDC 186/.4—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020030423>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: [brill.com/brill-typeface](https://brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 0079-1687

ISBN 978-90-04-43905-4 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-43909-2 (e-book)

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*To my parents, Gary and Catherine,  
with love and gratitude*



ἀλλ' ὅταν εἰς αὐτὸν ἴδωμεν, τότε ἡμῖν τέλος καὶ ἀνάπαυλα καὶ τὸ μὴ ἀπά-  
δειν χορεύουσιν ὄντως περὶ αὐτὸν χορείαν ἔνθεον.

PLOTINUS, *Ennead* VI.9.8, 43–45



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# Acknowledgements

One is reminded in completing writing on a philosophical topic—especially on Platonism(!)—of the irony of going against Socrates' judgment against the written form for philosophical discourse, rather than dialectical discourse between living souls, from Plato's *Phaedrus* (275d–277a). Indeed, although this book has broken that rule (like every Platonist), it must be vigorously maintained that setting this study's argument in hard, lifeless ink and paper could in no way be done without the many, countless live souls who helped me reach this point on the long road to grasping (if initially) Proclus and Damascius.

With this in mind, I wish first and foremost to thank my two supervisors and mentors, Peter Adamson and Jan Opsomer, for their acute insight and critical role in helping me formulate and develop my arguments, especially in interpreting the dense series of texts that underlie this study. Their support and patience in the difficult process of writing and revising is one for which I will be forever grateful. Furthermore, I wish to thank Inna Kupreeva for her help in guiding me on this path from my time in Edinburgh (2012–2014) during my early postgraduate work on Plotinus and Proclus, and moreover for her sharp insights and advice with earlier drafts of this study.

I also wish to thank a number of friends who had the patience and generosity in helping to review early drafts of this work in both its dissertation and manuscript form: especially Evan King, Laura Castelli, Antonio Vargas, Fedor Benevich, and Bethany Somma.

As much of this book was written during my doctoral studies between 2014–2017, I wish to thank the Munich School of Ancient Philosophy (MUSAΦ) at the LMU Munich for their generous financial support during this time. I also wish to thank my colleagues while in Munich for their help and support in various presentations and feedback: Sergei Mariev (especially for his gracious willingness to be an external reader in my doctoral disputation), Christof Rapp, Chris Noble, Antonio Ferro, Máté Herner, Andreas Lammer, Melina Vogiatzi, and Marilù Papandreou.

I also wish to thank the community at KU Leuven during my visit in March, 2017, especially Pieter d'Hoine, Carlos Steel, Albert Kobec, and Irini Fotini Viltanioti for their critical feedback when I presented my work there. In other presentations and conversation, I wish to thank for their critical feedback and generous help Christoph Horn, Denis Walter, Christoph Helmig (especially for his felicitous suggestion to pursue researching the One's causality in Damascius), Stephen Menn, George Boys-Stones, Philip Horky, Marije Martijn, David Butorac, Daniel Watson, Alan Brown, and Gonzalo Gamarra Jordan.

I have been very fortunate to have had the time to discuss the issues in my study with these people, for which I am grateful.

As the final form of this book was revised during my postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute for Medieval Research in the Austrian Academy of Sciences, I wish to thank Dragos Calma, Pavlina Rychterova, and Walter Pohl for their generous and gracious support during this time (especially while enduring the unprecedented global Coronavirus pandemic at the final stage in revising). I also wish to express my gratitude to the European Research Council for their financial support in preparing the book form of this study, within the framework of the project, NeopLAT (ERC\_CoG\_771640). And of course, many thanks to Frans de Haas and an anonymous reviewer for their help and critical feedback in revising and editing the work into its current book form.

Last but not least, I wish to express gratitude for the generous support and encouragement of many personal friends—among others, Dominic O'Reilly and Aaron Ortner for their stimulating conversations with me on Neoplatonist principles, while remaining ardent Aristotelians. And finally I wish to thank my parents, Gary and Catherine Greig, and other family for their constant moral support over these years. My stability and inner wellbeing has greatly depended on these people, for which I will always be in their debt.

Vienna

Holy Week 2020

# Preface

This book is the result of a three-year study for my doctoral dissertation, completed in October, 2017, and it forms a major benchmark to a years-long interest in the nature of first principles—and in turn, the basic notion of causality—from both a philosophical and theological context. As I realized early on, any discussion of what constitutes a good framework for the first principle—if or whether one philosophically maintains such a position—goes back to the history of philosophy: in this case, the foundation laid by Plato and Aristotle and the philosophical discussion that stretched from them into late antiquity and, what John Marenbon (2015) has called, the ‘Long Middle Ages’ up to the 18th-/19th-centuries A.D. Although the perennial issue of the first cause has motivated my interest in this general time period, what led me to the Neoplatonists was the result of an earlier interest in the afterlife of Aristotle’s first unmoved mover—and my great surprise that Platonists enthusiastically embraced much of Aristotle’s framework, while maintaining their basic affiliation with Plato (for instance in holding to unity, rather than intellect, as the defining characteristic of the First). The Neoplatonists’ appropriation of Aristotle, in both his method and much of his metaphysics, thus led me to consider the questions and tensions that arose in their framework as the result of synthesizing Aristotle and Plato—and, of course, much of the ensuing tradition after the two.

An additional interest has been seeing to what degree the Neoplatonists’ differing positions found their way into the ‘Long Middle Ages’ across the Latin, Byzantine, and Arabic worlds. Although ‘Aristotle’ is directly cited in many figures of this period, often this is ‘Aristotle’ (or the ‘Platonists’) as filtered through multiple developments in early and late Neoplatonists. Thus understanding philosophical discussions on the first cause in this period ends up necessitating a strong understanding of the Neoplatonists and the crux of the issues that they, in turn, face with their first cause, i.e. the One. It is in this light that this study, with its focus on Proclus and Damascius on the One, came to be.

Now for some brief technical notes. Throughout the book I will follow the general convention of Platonic and Neoplatonic scholars to refer to principles and transcendent (Platonic) forms in the uppercase—thus, ‘Form’ or ‘Intellect’, for the transcendent version; ‘form’ or ‘soul’, either for the particular, immanent form (i.e. the form, ‘man’, in Socrates), or the particularized principle or entity. There may be certain variations in some places, such as in the translations, but I attempt to follow this general convention throughout.

Additionally, in including the Greek for all primary text passages quoted, I also follow the standard conventional textual marks given by the editions of the texts:

- [...] —for *English* (translations and quotes)—indicates either paraphrasing, skipped section, context provided.
- [...] —for *Greek*—indicates a deletion or ignoring in the edition.
- ⟨...⟩ indicates conjectural additions in the Greek, usually following the edition.
- (...) —for *English*—indicates terms/phrases for clarification.
- Numbers in primary source quotations, especially in italic or bold, are mine unless noted.

Abbreviations for primary texts cited may be found in the Bibliography and *Index Locorum* below.

# Introduction

The notion of unity as a distinct, constitutive principle of reality has been the object of immense curiosity and philosophical consideration from antiquity to the present. In our experience of the world, we see unity as a predominant aspect demarcating the existence of things: both their distinction from other objects and kinds of objects, as well as their commonality *with* other objects and other kinds of objects.

For example, in looking at a tree we may see that it is made up of bark, wood, leaves, and branches (neverminding the atomic or sub-atomic particles that make up those distinct parts), yet it is characterized in some distinct way that makes it different from, for instance, a sculpture that is *also* made out of bark, wood, leaves, and branches. The tree then possesses a structure, or we might say 'kind', by which it is unique from the sculpture made up of the same type of material parts. One could say that the tree before us is 'one' in a way that the sculpture is not: while the sculpture has multiple parts externally attached together as a conglomerate whole, the tree has those parts developed from within itself, in a sense internal to itself, rather than brought in from outside. In this sense, the individual tree before us is 'one'.

One can go further and add additional ways in which the tree is 'one'. For instance, one can see that the structure or kind that makes the tree what it is is shared with other individual trees: the individual tree before us is 'one' with respect to the kind or species that it shares with other individual trees, and is hence 'one' with the other individual trees, in contrast to other substances which are not trees. Additionally the tree before us can be demarcated as 'one' from other trees of its kind, inasmuch as *this* individual tree before us is not, say, the other tree we might see in the distance. Hence it is 'one' as an individual apart from other individual trees.

Given these different instances of unity, we may go one step further and describe these different kinds of unities as coming from a concept, or perhaps an abstract entity, of pure unity: what gives each of these notions their distinct senses of being 'one', either as an individual, or as a certain kind, and so on. This principle would then be that in virtue of which we might say all these instances are, indeed, 'one'.

One can see from this how certain philosophers have considered unity, taken by itself, as the essential ground or foundation for reality. The heritage of this idea goes back to the 5th-century (B.C.) Presocratic, Parmenides of Elea, for whom all being is simply 'one', while all manifestations of plurality are,

consequently, illusory.<sup>1</sup> Much of the history of metaphysics could be potentially described as the attempt to address this radical claim that all things are ‘one’—whether essentially ‘one’, or ‘one’ in existence, or derived in some way from something which is purely ‘one’. While there are multiple angles from which the topic of unity has been considered, the one angle this work is interested to consider is the notion of a principle responsible for the character of unity in all things—i.e. the last notion considered in the previous paragraph. What this principle is and how it would function as a cause or foundation of unity in things is subsequently the main question that this work focuses on.

While arguments for this principle can be found in multiple contexts in both the history of philosophy and in contemporary metaphysics, the main locus of discussion on this principle lies in the concept of the ‘One’ from the Neoplatonist tradition of the 3rd- to 6th-century A.D.—from Plotinus (ca. 204/205–270 A.D.) to Olympiodorus (roughly 505–565 A.D.)<sup>2</sup> and Simplicius (roughly 480–560 A.D.).<sup>3</sup> Among previous eras of Platonism, the Neoplatonists’ own is marked by an extensive systematization that, in large part, goes back to Plotinus, while Proclus and his successors, including Damascius, tighten this systematization on a number of standard Platonist positions.<sup>4</sup>

For all Platonists (or Neoplatonists) of this time period,<sup>5</sup> the One functions as the first cause of all things inasmuch as it is the source of the unity

1 See e.g. Parmenides’ famous poem in Fr. 7. While subject to multiple interpretations, for now I consider Aristotle’s interpretation from *Met.* A.5, 986b27–987a2, esp.: ‘Parmenides seems to speak more circumspectly at times [than Xenophanes and Melissus]. For considering that beside what-is, what-is-not is nothing, he concludes that it follows by necessity there is one thing that is, namely what-is, and nothing else’ (trans. Graham). (Παρμενίδης δὲ μάλλον βλέπων ἔοικε που λέγειν· παρὰ γὰρ τὸ ὄν τὸ μὴ ὄν οὐθὲν ἀξιῶν εἶναι, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἓν οἶεται εἶναι, τὸ ὄν, καὶ ἄλλο οὐθέν.) In contemporary terms (e.g. Schaffer (2010)), this position would be called ‘existential monism’: namely that only one thing, or token (as opposed to type), exists.

2 See Opsomer (2010) 697 about the speculation for the dates.

3 See Baltussen (2010) 711 about the speculation for the dates. One can argue that ‘Platonism’, generically construed outside the Academy, continued beyond these figures—for instance in the form of the Christian, John Philoponus (ca. 490–ca. 570 A.D.), and onward for Byzantines like Maximus the Confessor. Strictly speaking, the school allegiance to Plato comes to an end in Athens with the closing of the Academy under Justinian, in 529 A.D., and in Alexandria with Olympiodorus (roughly 500–570).

4 On the question of ‘system’ particularly in Proclus, and in what way one could call him a ‘systematician’, cf. the insightful Martijn and Gerson (2017).

5 Here I use the term ‘Neoplatonist’ in a generic, non-controversial sense simply to refer to any school/pagan Platonist from Plotinus up to at least Damascius in the Athenian school and Olympiodorus in the Alexandrian, while respecting Lloyd Gerson’s critique (e.g. in (1996) 1, 5–6) against the pejorative use the term, ‘Neoplatonist’, had from the 19th- to early 20th-century. It is still a worthwhile question as to what specifically distinguishes and demarcates the ‘Neoplatonic’ period from previous periods of Platonism—certainly not that it is any

constitutive of beings, and in this sense ‘produces’ unity.<sup>6</sup> This follows on a Platonic framework whereby the physical world has its rational structure grounded in the ‘Forms’ (ἰδέα, εἰδή) as ontologically distinct, intelligible principles which are separate from their particular instantiations. Thus the Form of ‘tree’ or ‘treeness’ is distinct from different particular trees, yet provides each particular tree’s intelligible structure and organization. Since each Form is characterized by unity, while each differs from each other in their essential ‘content’ or substance, Neoplatonists expand on this framework for the Forms: just as one Form grounds many particulars, there must be one prior ‘Form’ or principle grounding the many Forms—i.e. the ‘One’.<sup>7</sup> The heritage of this framework goes back to Plato’s *Republic* VI, where Plato posits the Form of the Good which is the cause of the being and knowability of the Forms—where, consequently, it is said to be ‘beyond being’ (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας).<sup>8</sup> Overall Neoplatonists combine this reading of the Good from *Republic* VI with an ontological reading of the *Parmenides*’ first hypothesis, where the negations of the different attributes of being apply to the Form of the ‘One’.<sup>9</sup> This results in a unique kind of causality for the One, compared to the Forms, inasmuch as the Forms produce by their being, the One produces as *beyond* being, and hence has a distinct ontological status compared to the Forms. Consequently an asymmetric order of

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‘better’ or (especially) ‘worse’ than what came before it, either in Plato, the Old Academy, or Middle Platonism.

6 What this sense of ‘production’ and ‘causation’ means is spelled out in the next section, p. 7.

7 From Neoplatonists from Plotinus onward, the derivation of the world’s rational structure leads to the following threefold ontological structure of three immaterial principles: Soul, Intellect, and the One. Thus: (1) Soul distributes the world’s rational structure in matter and through time, using the Forms as paradigms for generating that structure; (2) Intellect, which is separate from matter (and by proxy Soul), contains and thinks the Forms in themselves, while functioning as a paradigm for Soul; and (3) the One in turn functions as the cause of the Forms’ (and therefore Intellect’s) unity, and derivatively as the cause of all things. In late Neoplatonists, from Iamblichus onward, this basic three-fold structure becomes elaborated, when each principle becomes distinguished between one universal, unparticipated cause and multiple particular, participated principles: for instance, one universal cause, Soul-itself, and separate, particular souls which correspond to their respective bodies. This general structure and the distinction between the early and later frameworks, we will see elaborated below in Chapter 1. For an overview and diagram of this structure, see Chlup (2012) 103. Here and throughout this work, I will use uppercase for names, like ‘Soul’ or ‘Being’, indicating self-subsisting principles or hypostases, while the lowercase for, e.g., ‘soul’ or ‘being’, to indicate either a common ontological category or particular entity (as individual souls, like individual bodies).

8 Plato, *Republic* VI, 508e1–6; 509b6–10.

9 Plato, *Parm.* 137c4–142a8.

dependence obtains between the One and beings: all beings are immediately related to the One as the cause of unity in them, yet the One is in no way related to them, and it does not, then, depend on them in the way they depend on it.

The influence of this kind of argument for a principle of beings like the One—i.e. as separate from beings, implying no dependency or relation on what it causes, yet still exercising causal influence—can be seen across a number of areas, particularly in philosophical theology and contemporary metaphysics. In philosophical theology, one can see a similar kind of consideration to the Neoplatonists arising in differing conceptions about a divine first cause of beings. For instance, Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)—one influential background for Neoplatonists on the One—argues for a first cause that is responsible for the continuous motion of all beings in the physical cosmos. Since even eternally moving entities, like the stars and planets, depend on a cause that guarantees their continued motion, for Aristotle this cause must ultimately be a principle that is completely in act (ἐνέργεια) and does not imply potentiality (δύναμις) in a strict sense. Cashed out, the principle must be immaterial (for anything enmattered necessarily implies potentiality) and it must be unmoved in itself (inasmuch as motion also implies potentiality).<sup>10</sup> The ‘unmoved mover’ then exists separately from the physical cosmos, inasmuch as it is unmoved and not characterized by potentiality in the way beings in the cosmos are, yet it coordinates and grounds the motion of all beings by its pure actuality (ἐνέργεια)—similarly to the One as the source of unity in all beings, while yet as prior to beings inasmuch as it is ‘beyond being’.

One also finds a similar argument in the later Avicenna (ca. 970–1037 A.D.), influential for Thomas Aquinas and later theologians, in his notion of the first, necessary principle of existence: since all beings in the cosmos exist contingently, inasmuch as they receive existence from other agents outside themselves, existence in other beings must go back to a cause that exists necessarily through itself rather than through another.<sup>11</sup> Thus beings which variously exist according to their respective kinds, or essences, come to be from an entity which is ‘beyond essence’—inasmuch as it is pure existence, and is not an existence qualified in a specific way, i.e. by essence. One may see an analogy here between Avicenna’s framework and the Neoplatonic framework for the One:<sup>12</sup> the One is similarly that by which beings have their existence, according to

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.6, esp. 1071b3–22.

<sup>11</sup> On Avicenna’s proof for God as the necessary existent, see Marmura (1980), De Haan (2016), and Adamson (2013). On Avicenna’s argument for the necessary existent in the context of the essence/existence distinction, see Bertolacci (2012) as well as Mayer (2001).

<sup>12</sup> Although see below, n. 17.



their unity, and furthermore their qualified states of unity (similar to beings in their qualified existences, for Avicenna) depend on a principle which is simply pure unity (similar to a principle which is pure existence, or the 'necessary existent').

In the case of contemporary metaphysics, one can find echoes of the Neoplatonists' position in contemporary discussions on monism and 'grounding'.<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Schaffer, for instance, has posited the notion of 'priority monism', according to which all things, while they exist as distinct particulars, are 'one' and interrelated by virtue of a prior whole which is the fundamental level of reality. For Schaffer this is the physical cosmos, or spacetime, as the containing whole.<sup>14</sup> Spatiotemporality then defines the interrelations and kinds of unity that exist between existent particulars, while it exists as a distinct 'whole' which determines the parts which inhere in it.<sup>15</sup> On the one hand, Schaffer follows the same intuition as Neoplatonists in terms of grounding the character of unity for physical substances according to some kind of distinct principle. On the other hand, one may raise an interesting question in comparing the two: granting that Schaffer's framework assumes a strict materialist ontology, in contrast to that of Neoplatonists,<sup>16</sup> Schaffer maintains that his principle of

13 Here I primarily have in mind 'metaphysical grounding' as discussed in Schaffer (2016) and Fine (2012) where (speaking generically) features about a thing or phenomenon (what is 'grounded') are explained in terms of their relation to another item, or items (what grounds). While distinct from the modern sense of 'causation', which is restricted to events and states of affairs, contemporary discussions on grounding could be seen as encompassing the ancient/medieval notion of causality (discussed in the next section)—an argument Schaffer implicitly attempts, and a further discussion of which would be a desideratum.

14 Schaffer (2010) argues this based on both the notion of causal interrelatedness and quantum entanglement—which he takes to imply that 'Democritean pluralism cannot provide an adequate basis for entangled systems' (53)—and subsequently from a mereological reading of the relation between individuals in the cosmos and the cosmos' relation to individuals as whole to parts (e.g. 55–57).

15 Although see Le Bihan (2018), who uses recent research on quantum gravity to claim that spatio-temporality is itself a derived feature of reality: consequently, a prior 'whole' or fundamental reality must underly spatio-temporality as the defining feature of physical individuals. This is perhaps one step closer to a Neoplatonist framework than Schaffer's, although Le Bihan maintains that this foundation would still be 'physical', even if without the feature of spacetime. Ultimately the difference in frameworks may amount to a question of philosophical method, as well as first principles, in granting a non-reductive naturalist ontology, as for Neoplatonists: see next footnote.

16 For a thoroughly engaging recent treatment of both contemporary and ancient naturalism in dialogue with Platonism (broadly construed), see Gerson (2020), esp. 93, n. 40, and 203, n. 19, on assessing Schaffer's framework in light of a Platonist/Aristotelian framework.

unity is merely an immanent feature of the cosmos—namely spatiotemporality as the encompassing whole of embodied substances—while the Neoplatonists maintain that the ‘encompassing whole’ must, in the end, be an ontologically separate principle, i.e. the One. One might then ask: in what sense must the principle be separate, even ontologically distinct, from the ‘parts’ that it orders, if indeed it explains a common feature in all particulars? How must the ‘containing whole’ be related immanently to the particulars it orders, if it exercises any causal or explanatory power (however conceived) over the parts it orders—or if separate, as for Neoplatonists, how can the ‘whole’ exercise causal power immanently in the corresponding parts?

While there are other frameworks one could go on to compare with the Neoplatonists’ own, these should so far give one an idea of the relevance for the Neoplatonists’ notion of the One in construing the principle as a cause, or ground, for beings: either in terms of their motion, or existence, or causal coordination or relationality (among other possible factors). In effect, the utility and value of the Neoplatonists’ discussion on the One and its relation to beings, particularly in its causality, should be apparent when considering the requirements of such a principle: particularly what its nature should be to explain the character of unity (or being) in all things in a sufficient way, and in what sense it must be separate from all things in this capacity.

In this light, one key issue for the Neoplatonic conception is the strict kind of separation, or transcendence, implied in the One’s causality. As mentioned above, the One produces the Forms, and thus produces beings inasmuch as it is ‘beyond being’. For Neoplatonists, however, this effectively means that the One cannot share *any* attribute with the beings it produces: while it is the source of unity in beings, unity in beings implies its opposite of plurality. Thus the One must be characterized in such a way that it is not even ‘one’ in this sense. In fact, to call it ‘the One’ is a self-consciously paradoxical choice, since the name only refers to the property of unity produced in beings. This is rather distinct from, for instance, Avicenna’s framework above, where the first cause produces being and existence by being paradigmatically existence-itself, without belonging to a particular genus or kind of being.<sup>17</sup> Thus in the Neoplatonic

17 Thus only in a loose sense is the Neoplatonic One analogous to Avicenna’s and Aquinas’ God, insofar as the first principle/God is a cause of beings by not being tied to the Forms or kinds of being. However, it is not apparent that unity, as it pertains to the One, can be treated in the same way as the concept of existence (*esse*) in Aquinas and Avicenna (in contrast to Gerson (1994) 7–9, Corrigan (1996), and Corrigan (1984)): even if beyond the category of being (τὸ ὄν), ‘to exist’ for the One (if one could even say that) still implies a property, unity—thus ‘to exist’ would always seem to mean ‘to exist *as one*’, rather than pure existence as found in Avicenna and Aquinas (following Kahn (1976), D’Ancona

formulation of the One, one finds the confluence of both transcendence and immanence: transcendence, insofar as the One ‘is not’, in one sense—and immanence, insofar as it is a cause which implies a relation with the things it causes. Ultimately there is an implicit yet critical tension when putting these two aspects together, and it is here that the late period of Neoplatonism, particularly the Athenian school before its closing in 529 A.D., becomes relevant for our study: namely Proclus (ca. 412–485 A.D.) and Damascius (ca. 462–after 532 A.D.).

### 1.1 The Backdrop of Causality in a Platonist/Aristotelian Context

Before we consider why specifically Proclus and Damascius, it is worth reflecting on the basic question of causality, and why we have the tension that we do for Neoplatonists. Although causation in a contemporary context tends to be equated with event causation,<sup>18</sup> for Platonists and Aristotelians causation is to be understood in terms of types, or kinds, of causes that explain a given effect.<sup>19</sup> Thus, when one asks why, for instance, the mug fell, the answer given is not just that the hand pushed the mug—an event—but, more primarily, that the hand is of a *type* (as having a hard surface, let’s say, or being moved) such that it has the power to bestow a distinct temporal position on the mug, through locomotion, which then results in the mug’s fall.<sup>20</sup> In this sense, causality for these

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(2011)). In this respect the analogy between the One and God in Avicenna/Aquinas seems to break down. See Adamson and Galluzzo (Forthcoming) for a discussion of this issue in relation to the origin of the essence/existence distinction.

- 18 What one may call a ‘Humean’ or ‘Neo-Humean’ notion of causality, commonly employed in contemporary contexts: see among others Schmaltz (2014) 14–16; cf. Loux (2006) 187–204 and Lowe (2002) 157–160. It is noteworthy that the contemporary notion of ‘metaphysical grounding’, referenced earlier, comes closer to the sense of ‘cause’ used within an Aristotelian/Platonist context, i.e. in a broader explanatory context. (Thus from a contemporary context, e.g. speaking in terms of that ‘in virtue of which’ something exists, for grounding, as opposed to why something, like a ball, is at position Y rather than X, for ‘causation.’) See Schaffer (2016), esp. 50–59; 95–96.
- 19 See Schmaltz (2014) for a general overview of the notion of causation, especially efficient causation, and its history from antiquity to contemporary contexts.
- 20 What has been referred to as ‘causal dispositionalism’ in contemporary context, i.e. that causes bring about their effects in virtue of a given ‘power’ pertaining to the object (as opposed to the mere event, or ‘connection’ between objects, in a Human context): see Mumford (2014), Mumford and Anjum (2010). Along similar lines to this latter work, cf. Kupreeva (2010) for an analysis of Aristotle’s notion of contingent necessity in causation in reply to a Humean objection against an Aristotelian, or ‘causal dispositionalist’, framework.

figures involves explaining features belonging to natural substances and the world according to their essential traits or character, as opposed to explaining those features simply in terms of states of affairs or facts as in a contemporary context.<sup>21</sup> Although Aristotelians and Platonists differ on where to place the causes of these essential features—either solely in particular instantiations of a species (for Aristotelians), or in transcendent Forms and causes (for Platonists)—they share the same position that accounting for causes is directly related to ontology.

One important aspect for both conceptions is the principle of causal synonymy: namely that a feature of the cause, whether an essential or accidental property, is the same in kind as that which is transmitted in the effect.<sup>22</sup> Thus the property, 'heat', in a hot stone which is dropped in cold water is transmitted to the water: the water then also becomes the same in kind as the cause, which is warm. This might initially seem counterintuitive for cases like a hammer causing the effect of shattering glass: we would not say that the hammer, also, shatters, even though it causes shattering. Synonymy would work in a different way in this case: the hammer's hard surface has the potentiality to produce shattering, while its material makes it impossible for it to shatter in itself when the glass also shatters (rather unlike two glasses, for instance, smashing into each other which may both shatter). The same form is then shared between the two objects—for instance, we might say motion—while it only exists in actuality in one, namely the glass, where the glass shards are put in motion.

Given these two examples, here we may mention two corresponding versions of this principle. For Plato and later Platonists, the Forms are causally 'synonymous' with their effects only in one direction. For instance, while the property, 'beauty', is shared between the Form of 'Beauty-itself' and its participants, the way it is shared is distinct: the Form of 'Beauty' conveys its essential property to all beautiful things—thus the participants share the character, 'beauty', with their essential source—while the Form does not, inversely, share the character of plurality belonging to the participants. By contrast for Aristotle, causes like the hot stone (above) are causally 'synonymous' with their

21 Although Aristotle, for instance, allows for accidental causes: see Aristotle, *Phys.* II.4–5. However even in these cases, accidental causation is possible only within the context of admitting essential causes.

22 The terminology, 'synonymy', comes from Aristotle: see e.g. *Phys.* VIII.5, 257b9–14. On the principle in general, see Bodnár and Pellegrin (2009) 279–289; Hankinson (1998) 31–32, 129; and Makin (1990–1991). Hankinson links the principle to Neoplatonists, in connection with the 'principle of prior actuality' and the 'principle of simplicity' in p. 454. The principle is further discussed below in the context of Proclus in Ch. 2.

effects in two directions—e.g. only an enmattered man produces another enmattered man. In the former case, synonymy is maintained alongside the cause's transcendence in relation to the effect, similar to the example of the hammer and the glass. In the case of man causing man, synonymy entails a two-way relation, which does *not* imply transcendence, like the earlier example of the hot stone and water—in fact, typical cases of synonymy for Aristotle entail reciprocity, so that the cold water, in turn, cools the hot stone.<sup>23</sup> Thus causes like the unmoved mover, for Aristotle, do not exhibit causal synonymy, since they do not convey their characteristic property to the effect, as in the case of the hot stone or the hammer; in the case of the unmoved mover, its actuality as a divine intellect is entirely self-focused, and instead becomes the final cause for the motion of the world-sphere, which in turn moves the stars and the planets.<sup>24</sup>

As we will later see, Neoplatonists like Proclus come to appropriate features from both versions of causal synonymy: they appropriate Aristotle's characterization that the actuality of the cause is that by which the effect is conveyed, yet they maintain a Platonic model whereby Forms and immaterial entities like Intellect and Soul are not the same in kind, or reciprocally acted on, by the lower effect that they produce. However it is within the appropriation of this understanding of causal synonymy that we find disagreements arising—specifically for Proclus in response to Plotinus and his successors, and in turn for Damascius in response to Proclus. This issue becomes elaborated below, but we may put it briefly here. Both Platonists appropriate a form of the Aristotelian model of synonymy on their understanding of higher, immaterial causes in relation to the effects, although in radically different ways. For Proclus, the cause is synonymous with its effect 'by causality' ( $\kappa\alpha\tau' \alpha\iota\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$ ), since it anticipates the character of its effect and must, in some way, pre-contain it. In Proclus' model this means that one must add an additional 'step' and posit two kinds of causes: a first cause that does not imply such an anticipation  $\kappa\alpha\tau' \alpha\iota\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$ , and a second, intermediate cause where the  $\kappa\alpha\tau' \alpha\iota\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$  relation to the effect applies. For Damascius, however, this is not enough: any notion of 'cause' in

23 Thus in the hammer/glass case, above, even if the hammer does not shatter, it would still be, in some sense, reciprocally acted on by the glass insofar as it is pushed back (whether slowed down or stopped). Implicitly this is the case for enmattered causes, like their effects. As we will see, Aristotle allows for cases of efficient causes that do not imply reciprocal action: for instance, for the artist creating a statue, the artist's *thought* of the form of the statue is the efficient cause of the statue coming about, but it is not affected by the matter of the statue that comes to be. Discussed below in p. 84–88.

24 Bodnár and Pellegrin (2009) 289–290.

one or the other case directly entails its effect, and must reciprocally become like the effect it brings about. In this sense Damascius more strongly holds to the Aristotelian model of causal synonymy. However for immaterial causes, like Intellect and especially the One, this endangers their transcendence and brings to the fore the issue of transcendence and causality when we look at Proclus' account in comparison with Damascius'.

## 1.2 Why Proclus and Damascius?

Here we can now ask, among other Neoplatonists that could be considered, why focus on Proclus and Damascius? Two answers may be given: first, both philosophers explicitly respond to the internal tensions in earlier Neoplatonists' theories about the One, and further Damascius' framework shows how a different kind of tension results in Proclus' own response to earlier Neoplatonists. And second, little work has been done in contemporary scholarship on the relation between Proclus and Damascius, specifically in light of responding to this internal tension between the One's causality and transcendence. To the degree that we see the basic Neoplatonic account of the One scrutinized and radically revised, especially in addressing difficulties about the One, Proclus and Damascius should be considered together here.

To begin with the historical background, one problem with the notion of the One, from Plotinus onward, is that it at once transcends its effects, while as a cause it accounts for specific features found in the effects—namely, the character of unity in all things, as well as the plurality which characterizes all things.<sup>25</sup> Since plurality and unity are entailed in 'all things', this suggests that the One is implicated with its effects, insofar as causes are synonymous with their effects. Yet on Plotinus' interpretation, and for all subsequent Neoplatonists, the One radically transcends its effects in such a way that it does *not* pre-contain the effect: for if the effect of the One is plurality, then the One cannot, itself, be the plurality which it produces. In this sense the One is not a 'cause', like other causes, since it is not synonymous with its effect of plurality.

25 Whereas in earlier Platonists—for instance in the Old Academy—a second, apparently separate principle accounted for the existence of matter and plurality, with the Old Academy's Dyad for Speusippus and Xenocrates. The trend for Neoplatonists, from Plotinus onward, is to affirm a strict one-principle view: the One must then be responsible *both* for plurality and unity emerging from itself. See e.g. Plotinus, *Enn.* 11.9.4. On Plotinus as a unique figure in the shift from a 'principle pluralist' position among earlier Platonists, see Noble (2018).

Yet, on the other hand, it is still a 'cause' insofar as all things are from it, and insofar as it produces its own property, unity, in all things. The difficulty then becomes how to distinguish between these two aspects in the One: between its transcendence over all things, and its synonymy as the cause of unity in all things.

I address the varying attempts to solve this difficulty in the next chapter, on the predecessors leading up to Proclus and Damascius, but we may summarize at least two approaches that Cristina d'Ancona has insightfully highlighted.<sup>26</sup> The first approach, which is taken up by Plotinus and Porphyry (and, as I argue, up to Iamblichus),<sup>27</sup> is to say that the One's causality is directly analogous to the Forms' causality: just as a given Form, like the 'Beautiful-itself', gives shape to its determined participants by being shapeless and undetermined relative to them, so the One gives determination and thereby plurality to things by itself being formless and without plurality compared to the Forms and all subsequent plurality. In this sense the One functions like an intelligible cause.<sup>28</sup> Yet the drawback of this approach is that it suggests that the One is, in some sense, intelligible, exactly since the One acts like an intelligible cause. Just as the Form, Beauty, anticipates the varying instantiations of its property within its unity, so also the One anticipates the character of Intellect within its unity. This would explain why Plotinus often switches from radically negative language to positive language for the One in treatises like *Enn.* vi.8.13 ff., where the One is portrayed as the paradigm of Intellect inasmuch as it is a cause of itself and has its own activity (ἐνέργεια)—characters otherwise only appropriate for Intellect.<sup>29</sup> We might then characterize this as a sort of 'two-sided' characterization for the One.

The second approach, taken up by Proclus and Damascius, is to distinguish the One from a set of intermediate principles, so that the One is only

26 D'Ancona Costa (1996), esp. 361–362.

27 D'Ancona seems to include Iamblichus in what I call here the 'second approach' (i.e. separating the One's causality from its production of plurality), however I think this is not accurate—or at least needs clarification. As I argue below (1.3), Iamblichus still falls into the 'first approach' inasmuch as he construes the One as the cause of plurality which is first manifested in the intermediate principles after it. The difference in Proclus' version is that the principles after the One are themselves 'one'-only, whereas for Iamblichus they are simultaneously 'one' and plural. Cf. Damascius' critique of Iamblichus on this in *DP* 11, 16,4–16 (and discussion below in p. 267–270).

28 D'Ancona Costa (1996) 374–375.

29 Of course it must be noted that Plotinus, himself, signposts his discussion beforehand in *Enn.* vi.8.13 as unusual: he says that the positive attributes he gives for the One cannot be made in a literal, 'correct' way, but in a second, 'persuasive' way, e.g. in lines 1–5. Discussed below in 1.1.1.



directly responsible for the production of unity, while the intermediate principles are directly responsible for the production of plurality and unity at all lower levels of being.<sup>30</sup> In one sense this relieves the tension implied by the earlier model, since the One's first effect is not plurality but entities that are also just 'one' themselves (i.e. the 'henads'). At the same time the One is still preserved as the cause of 'all things' (τὰ πάντα)<sup>31</sup> through its delegated causality, while it also transcends the plurality implied in all things, at the lower levels.

It is within this second approach that Proclus and Damascius diverge on the One's causal relation. As I show in the following chapters, Proclus and Damascius are both responding to the tension implied in this first approach, however the solution that each employs differs. For Proclus, the One's transcendence is *also* causal, insofar as the products after the One are also 'one' in themselves. For Damascius, even while admitting intermediate principles, the One still implies causal synonymy with 'all things': the One then cannot be truly transcendent over 'all things'. The difference between these two statements hinges on how one understands the following causal sequence: if A causes B, and B causes C, A is then 'cause' of C. For Proclus, the conclusion does not imply that A is *synonymous* with C, although A is still cause of C by transitivity. For Damascius, if A is a cause of C—whether mediately or immediately—this still implies that it is synonymous with C. A is consequently *not* transcendent over C, as it would be for Proclus, since it is synonymous with C. It is this latter claim that leads Damascius to assert that the first principle cannot be the One, but another principle beyond the One, 'the Ineffable', which has no causal relation in any way to the One or its effects. Thus, whereas Proclus tries to uphold causality and transcendence together in the One, Damascius splits these two aspects into separate principles.

### 1.3 Reception in Byzantine, Arabic, and Latin Contexts

One way of understanding the two approaches borne out in Proclus and Damascius can be seen if we look at their reception, either implicitly or explicitly in their immediate reception in late antique and medieval Byzantine,

30 Cf. D'Ancona Costa (1996) 375–377.

31 Although the term is meant in a broad, maximal sense here, τὰ πάντα takes on a technical connotation for Damascius, inasmuch as it encapsulates both the henads (characterized by unity) and beings (characterized by differentiation/plurality). On this see below, p. 219, esp. n. 4.



Latin, and Islamic (or Arabic)<sup>32</sup> philosophical and theological contexts. As has been mentioned in scholarship, Damascius himself does not appear to have had much explicit reception after the end of pagan Platonism in the sixth century A.D.<sup>33</sup> It would appear that even in the last few figures after Damascius in the Academy, no mention or response is made to Damascius' metaphysical innovations.<sup>34</sup> Although one might think that this leads to a philosophical dead-end, one still finds echoes of Damascius and his ensuing framework in the receivers of Proclus' thought across the three contexts<sup>35</sup>—including cases where certain solutions tend towards Damascius' Ineffable. We find in these contexts the question whether, for instance, the first principle, or God, is a 'cause' or not; whether God must be distinguished between an ineffable aspect and a causal aspect; and in what sense God is transcendent—that is, whether beyond being or as Being-itself.

For Byzantines,<sup>36</sup> the earliest line of influence for Proclus can be found in the mysterious author of works like *On the Divine Names*—commonly known as the Pseudo-Dionysius.<sup>37</sup> One finds in the latter both an emphasis on God's transcendence, which at times implies language from Damascius' Ineffable,<sup>38</sup>

32 On categorizing 'Arabic' vs. 'Islamic' philosophy, cf. Adamson (2016) 298. Here I will just refer to both together.

33 See Van Riel (2010) 672, n. 10: 'Michael Psellus (eleventh century) mentions Damascius' name, and calls him an Aristotelian; he also refers to a Dapsamius, according to whom "God is a simplicity that has absorbed the universe"—which is clearly a mistaken reference to Damascius. Other Byzantine texts may be relying on Damascius without mentioning him'. On this, see Van Riel's introduction in Damascius (2008) clxxxi–clxxxiii.

34 In this respect, Proclus' thought and works—especially the *Elements of Theology*—likely enjoyed more popularity and success due to the straightforward metaphysical distinctions that he applies for principles, especially in a propositional format like the *ET*. By contrast, a work like Damascius *De Principiis* as a treatise engaged in dialectic may not be well-suited for a constructive philosophical project as one finds by contrast in Proclus' reception.

35 On Proclus' reception in general, see Adamson and Karfik (2017), and articles in the recently edited volumes of Layne and Butorac (2017) and Gersh (2014a).

36 On the reception of Proclus and Neoplatonism in the Byzantine tradition, among several recent works, see Mariev (2017b) (as well as collected articles in Mariev (2017a)), alongside Parry (2006), de Garay (2014), Trizio (2014), and Lankila (2017).

37 For an overview of the works and theology of Ps.-Dionysius, see Brown (2012) and Perl (2010a). On Ps.-Dionysius and the relation to Proclus and Neoplatonism, among many other publications, see Saffrey (1982), Wear and Dillon (2007), Lankila (2014), and more recently, Dillon (2017).

38 See for instance Ps.-Dionysius, *Epistle* 11, esp. lines 1–4, where God is said to transcend the 'source of divinity and goodness'; cf. Griffith (1997) 241. This hearkens back to Damascius' claim that the Ineffable transcends the One, as the Good and source of divinity. For a more substantive treatment and comparison between Damascius and Ps.-Dionysius, see

and also a collapse of Proclus' causal categories of the 'unparticipated' and 'participated' which indicate separate entities. Where Proclus would distinguish between these two sets as separate principles or henads, Ps.-Dionysius combines these two as simply aspects: in one sense God is 'unparticipated', transcendent, and beyond being; in another sense God is directly 'participated', immanent, and Being-itself.<sup>39</sup> The later Byzantine bishop and theologian, Nicholas of Methone (early 1100s–ca. 1160/66), who commented on Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, adopts a Ps.-Dionysian formulation of 'unparticipated participated things' (ἀμεθέτως μετεχόμενα) to speak of God as both unparticipated and participated in the effects, while he also criticizes Proclus' hard distinction between these two attributes.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, the earlier Maximus the Confessor (d. 662) seems to maintain the hard Proclean distinction between unparticipated and participated when he distinguishes between God in his eternal, uncreated works (ἔργα) (alongside temporal, created works) and God in himself, as 'infinitely infinite times' (ἀπειράκις ἀπείρως)<sup>41</sup> transcending both eternal and created works.<sup>42</sup> This latter formulation contrasts with Proclus' distinction between the One and the henads, as being of the same nature and both 'one'-only, and is rather reminiscent of Damascius' distinction between the Ineffable and the One and henads, where there is no ontological or causal link between the two sides. On this picture, God causes all things only through the uncreated, eternal works—like Proclus' participated henads. Yet Maximus mentions this distinction only briefly in passing, while in other passages he reverts to a Ps.-Dionysian-like 'collapse' of negations and assertions applied to God: for instance, Maximus both denies and affirms 'beginning, middle, and

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Lilla (1997), as well Mainoldi (2017), esp. 210–214. However cf. Adamson and Karfik (2017) 294: 'As a Christian, Dionysius does not pursue the sort of proposal we find in Damascius, who separates out the truly ineffable as a further divine principle above the (already unknowable) One'.

39 One could draw a parallel here to Iamblichus' two-fold way of affirming and denying the terms, 'beginning, middle, and end', to the first principle: see below, p. 63–65. More distantly, a parallel could also be drawn to Syrianus and Proclus, where the affirmation and denial of 'beginning, middle, and end' pertain respectively to separate entities (unlike Iamblichus): the denial to the One-itself, and the affirmation to the One *in relation to other things*; see below, p. 70–72.

40 Matula (2011) 882. For a general overview of Nicholas, see Robinson (2017).

41 Compare with Proclus' and Damascius' use of this term in varying positive/negative connotations: see p. 274 n.144.

42 Maximus the Confessor, *Centuries of Theology* 1.48–50 (1100C–1101B). On the relation of this passage with Proclus, see my article (2017); I also address this issue in the context of Maximus' doctrine of the Λογός/λόγοι distinction in his *Ambiguum* 7 in a forthcoming article.

end' of God without making an ontological distinction between these two aspects.<sup>43</sup>

It is in the later Byzantine theologian and saint, Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), that we find an attempt to systematize the distinction between God's transcendent and immanent/causal aspects along the Proclean lines developed in Maximus,<sup>44</sup> when Palamas distinguishes between God's essence (οὐσία), as absolutely transcendent, and activities (ἐνέργειαι), as uncreated and eternal, which represent God as participated.<sup>45</sup> This became a point of criticism for critics like Nikephoros Gregoras, who linked Palamas' distinction with that of Proclus between the unparticipated and participated, which for Nikephoros (like Nicholas of Methone) suggests separate gods and would imperil both God's simplicity and Christian monotheism.<sup>46</sup> Palamas' later writings, as well as his followers, attempted to clarify the distinction in a way that would affirm both the simplicity of God and some form of 'real' or virtual distinction without endangering divine simplicity.<sup>47</sup> In any case, among all these

43 Maximus the Confessor, *Centuries of Theology* 1.2, 1.8. The formulation itself comes directly from Ps.-Dionysius, *De Div. Nom.* 187,1–3; 189,11–14. See also earlier n. 39.

44 See Van Rossum (1985) 68–80; Demetracopoulos (2011) 278–280, esp. n. 47.

45 See e.g. Gregory Palamas, *Triads* 111.2.6–7. In the latter case, Palamas explicitly references Maximus' terminology in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48–50. For a thorough survey of the philosophical developments that lead to Palamas, see Bradshaw (2004).

46 Cf. Demetracopoulos (2011) 277–278, who cites the phrase, 'lower divinity' (θεότης ὑφειμένη) (or in Demetracopoulos' translation, 'lower deity') in reference to the ἐνέργειαι from Palamas' *Third Letter to [Gregory] Akindynos*. This leads Demetracopoulos to conclude, using Akindynos' and Gregoras' claims, that Palamas' distinction between the essence and the activities (ἐνέργειαι) is 'redolent' of Proclus' framework between higher and lower ontological levels of entities, in contrast to Ps.-Dionysius' 'collapse' of the levels (implicitly following Von Ivánka (1964)). However see Russell (2019) 116–120, who disputes Demetracopoulos' claim regarding Palamas' use of the phrase, θεότης ὑφειμένη: questioning the manuscript evidence, Russell instead claims that Palamas explicitly avoids claims of 'higher' and 'lower' ontological levels, although he concedes that Palamas maintains an ontological difference between the essence and activities. See also Mariev (2017b) 16–18, esp.: 'However, it is important to understand that not only do some of Palamas' theses point towards what can be characterized as "unconscious" Neoplatonism, (see Von Ivánka 1964) but, as Demetracopoulos maintains, Palamas also quite consciously adopted some typically Neoplatonic, and more specifically Proclean, theoretical elements. It is probable that he did so because he thought that Proklos was a quasi-Christian author, whose authority derives from the indisputable authority of Ps.-Dionysios the Areopagite'.

47 See Demetracopoulos (2011) and Kappes, Goff, and Giltner (2014). Late Byzantines, as especially Gregorios Scholarios, tended to interpret Palamas in light of recent fourteenth-century translations of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus into Greek. In the end Scotus became a more prevalent interpretive lens, rather than Aquinas, for reading Palamas. On this see Kappes (2017).

Byzantine figures one can recognize the tension at work between affirming God's transcendence, as the first principle before all things, and God's causality, as immanent and what is first participated by all beings. One finds directions both towards Damascius' conclusion of a principle beyond the unparticipated/participated, and towards the opposite conclusion, combining Proclus' unparticipated/participated distinction.

For the Arabic-Islamic world, Proclus' framework for the One and its causality came through a series of texts produced by the 9th-century circle of al-Kindī, collectively referred to as the 'Arabic Proclus', and a specific text, the *Book on the Pure Good*,<sup>48</sup> which became the well-known *Liber de Causis* in its Latin translation.<sup>49</sup> Both collections of texts reflect a great simplifying of the metaphysical hierarchy from Proclus, where the *De Causis*, for instance, does not raise the distinction between unparticipated and participated—a major point for Proclus.<sup>50</sup> Among other innovations, one significant change from Proclus in the *De Causis* is that the first cause is described as the 'first being', and not just pure unity as for Proclus.<sup>51</sup> Although one may wonder about the principle's transcendence since it is not 'beyond being' as for Proclus (while still beyond the characteristic composition of lower beings), the *De Causis* still seems to preserve the same form of causality for the first principle, just as Proclus' (and Plotinus') One, insofar as it transcends Intellect and all lower beings which are characterized by plurality.<sup>52</sup> A second, notable change is that the

48 Full title: 'Book of Aristotle's Exposition of the Pure Good' (*Kitāb al-Īdāh fi l-hayr al-mahd li-Aristūṭālīs*). The work was falsely attributed to Aristotle (and Alexander of Aphrodisias, it would seem), rather than as an adaptation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. See Bardenhewer (1882) and Guagliardo (1996).

49 Adamson and Karfík (2017) 295–296. On the general reception history of Proclus in the al-Kindī circle, see the collected papers of D'Ancona (1995); on the reception of Plotinus in the circle, see also Adamson (2002).

50 For an analysis of the consequences of this position, see Riggs (2017).

51 On the general comparison of the *Liber de Causis* with Proclus, see D'Ancona (1992).

52 It is also important to note, 'being' may have a different connotation between Proclus (and by proxy Plotinus) and the *Liber de Causis*: for Proclus, Being (τὸ πρῶτως ὄν) is the first plurality, although simpler than Intellect, since it is a composite of 'limit' and 'unlimited' (see *ET* Prop. 89). The *De Causis*, by contrast (and perhaps by proxy al-Kindī), seems to equate being with unity, without this question of composition. Along these lines, al-Kindī makes Intellect the first plurality: see Adamson (2016) 302. For a study on the shift in the use of the term, 'being', from the Neoplatonic to the Arabic (and eventually Latin) context, see D'Ancona (2011); note esp. her insightful conclusion in 44–45: 'It has been suggested by [Charles] Kahn in a groundbreaking article that existence in the modern sense becomes a central concept in philosophy only in the period when Greek ontology is radically revised in the light of a metaphysics of creation: that is to say, under the influence of Biblical religion. As far as I can see, this development did not take place with Augustine or with the Greek Church Fathers, who remained under the sway of classical

principle is described as ‘creative’,<sup>53</sup> implying that it brings things into existence from non-being by will rather than by necessity.<sup>54</sup> This would implicitly counter an ‘emanationist’ model of causality implied in Proclus and other Neoplatonists, insofar as higher causes, including the One, necessarily bring about their lower effects.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, the *Liber de Causis*, like al-Kindi in his *On First Philosophy*, endorses a framework of mediated causality for the first principle, so that creation happens through secondary principles: thus beings are created by the principle through Intellect.<sup>56</sup> While al-Kindi emphasizes the unity of the first principle, denying of it attributes that only apply to creatures characterized by multiplicity, he still allows for the principle to be considered properly as ‘cause’.<sup>57</sup> Al-Kindi is thus similar to Proclus, insofar as both affirm that the first principle’s transcendence is not at odds with its causality. By contrast a later critic of al-Kindi—Ibn Ḥazm of Córdoba (994–1064)—attacks the ascription of ‘cause’ (*illa*) to God, since for Ibn Ḥazm causation implies a necessary relation to the effect, which goes against the notion of God’s ineffability

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ontology. The new metaphysics seem to have taken shape in Arabic-Islamic philosophy, in the form of a radical distinction between necessary and contingent existence: between the existence of God on the one hand, and that of the created world on the other. The old Platonic contrast between Being and Becoming, between the eternal and the perishable (or, in Aristotelian terms, between the necessary and the contingent) now gets reformulated in such a way that for the contingent being of the created world (which was originally present only as a ‘possibility’ in the divine mind) the property of ‘real existence’ emerges as a new attribute or ‘accident’, a kind of added benefit bestowed by God upon possible beings in the act of creation’.

53 See *De Causis* Prop. 8, from Adamson and Karfik (2017) 296: ‘The First Cause is neither intellect, nor soul, nor nature, but is above intellect, soul and nature; for it is creative (*mubdi’a*) of all things’.

54 Adamson and Karfik (2017) 296. This could also be connected to al-Kindi’s position against the eternity of the universe, where God creates the universe by will, rather than necessarily: on this see Adamson (2016) 302.

55 Although one could dispute this characterization, i.e. whether any essential difference obtains between necessity and will, the roots for such a claim go back to John Philoponus’ arguments against Proclus in his *De Aeternitate Mundi*. In various passages Philoponus seems to maintain a distinction in the first cause, or God, between God’s possession of the principles (λόγοι) of beings and God’s willing certain of those principles into being at different points in time (e.g. *De Aet. Mund.* 76,26–77,13; 36,27–37,8)—which may run counter to Proclus’ claim that all causes produce simply by their own being (αὐτῶ τῷ εἶναι). On this see Verrycken (2010) 746–747. Needless to say, Philoponus’ framework proved influential for the Arabic-Islamic philosophical world, albeit latently in philosophers before Avicenna and more explicitly afterward: see Lammer (2017), esp. 432–433.

56 Adamson and Karfik (2017) 296, and Adamson (2016) 301.

57 Adamson (2016) 302.

as beyond any relation.<sup>58</sup> This directly parallels Damascius' own critique of making the first principle a 'cause', since it implies 'coordination' (σύνταξις) with the effect and in this sense cannot be prior as a principle (ἀρχή).<sup>59</sup> Like Damascius as well, Ibn Ḥazm proposes that God instead 'establishes' (*waḍa'a*) causes, like the four elements, which directly bring about their effects. This would also parallel Damascius' statement that the Ineffable is a 'sanctuary' (ἄδυτον) from which the One emerges as a cause which gives rise to its effect of all things (τὰ πάντα).<sup>60</sup>

In the Latin tradition Proclus passed through the ninth-century Latin translations of Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus by Eriugena (ca. 815–ca. 877),<sup>61</sup> and later on the translations of the *Liber de Causis* as well as William of Moerbeke's Latin translation of Proclus' works from the Greek.<sup>62</sup> Although the same tension is not expressed in terms of causality and transcendence, as between al-Kindī and Ibn Ḥazm, above, an analogous tension arises in the later Latin tradition between whether to characterize God as pure being, as found in those like Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), or as unity beyond being, as found in the later German Dominican tradition, like Meister Eckhart (1260–ca. 1328).<sup>63</sup> Aquinas is uniquely positioned insofar as he was the first figure in the Latin West to appropriate the three distinct lines of Proclus' reception at once, as mentioned above. In the *De Causis* Aquinas recognizes Proclus' influence, and goes on to use Proclus to show how the *De Causis*' characterization of the principle 'creating' through an intermediary, Intellect, should be contextualized: beings *qua* beings do not come to be through Intellect, but only beings endowed with intellect, while beings as such come to be directly through the principle of Being-itself.<sup>64</sup> Whereas for Proclus, and implicitly the *De Causis*, these represent separate principles, Aquinas follows Ps.-Dionysius (and his interpretation of

58 Adamson (2016) 302–303: 'Instead, Ibn Ḥazm proposes that we should see God as 'establishing' (*waḍa'a*) certain causes (such as the four elements) which do necessarily give rise to their effects. Ibn Ḥazm provides us with a very clear instance of the tension discussed at the beginning of this chapter: God's primacy is to be understood as transcendence, and this makes it impossible to call Him a cause. Unsurprisingly, Ibn Ḥazm quotes in this context the aforementioned Qur'ānic stricture that 'no thing is like God'.

59 Cf. Adamson (2016) 300, n. 6.

60 Cf. Damascius, *DP* 1, 8,6–11 (discussed below in p. 294–295).

61 On the reception of Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus, and in general on Eriugena's work, see Hankey and Gerson (2010).

62 For William's specific translation of Proclus' *Elements* (which Thomas Aquinas refers to), see Boese (1985).

63 Although there are passages where Eckhart speaks of being in God, although contextualized by God's self-identity. See Adamson and Karfik (2017) 300, n. 51.

64 Adamson and Karfik (2017) 298–299.



Aristotle) by identifying Being-itself, Life-itself, and Intellect-itself with the first principle, while Aquinas also maintains the *De Causis*' (and, in addition, Avicenna's) characterization of the first principle as pure being.<sup>65</sup> Aquinas thus follows the *De Causis* by affirming that it is in virtue of God's transcendence that he is a cause, since God's being is his own, and it is in this capacity that God also functions as the paradigmatic cause of being for all created things. The later receivers of Proclus in the German Dominican tradition, especially Meister Eckhart and Berthold of Moosburg (d. 1361), a Latin commentator on Proclus' *Elements*, come to appropriate Proclus' position that unity, rather than being, is the characteristic trait of the first principle, unlike Aquinas' and the *De Causis*' position.<sup>66</sup> For these figures, being comes to represent an attribute strictly linked with creation, so that God's transcendence cannot be represented by 'being', but rather, in this way, as beyond being.<sup>67</sup> In one sense we find a return to a standard Proclean position by affirming unity for the first principle, while at the same time the German Dominicans' emphasis on God's unity as discontinuous with being, which is linked with creation, once again loosely parallels Damascius' division between the Ineffable, as first principle, and all things (τὰ πάντα) as the effect.

In sum, one thus finds within these three distinct contexts a parallel to the specific issues raised for the metaphysics of Proclus and Damascius, partly helped by the reception of Proclus and by internal discussions within each of these traditions. Thus, in addition to the broad discussion of first principles at the beginning, one can see here the widespread relevance of Damascius and

65 Oddly Aquinas fails to mention Proclus' own position that unity, rather than being, is the first principle, as noted in Adamson and Karfik (2017) 299.

66 Adamson and Karfik (2017) 299, although cf. earlier n. 63. For an all-encompassing overview of these positions see Aertsen (1992) and Beierwaltes (1992).

67 Adamson and Karfik (2017) 300: 'The German tradition connects this apophatic tendency in the Proclus materials to Dionysian negative theology. This leads to an anti-Thomistic position which restores the original Proclean (and of course more generally Neoplatonic) claim that God is beyond being. The First Cause may be identified with One or the Good, as in the *Elements*, but being is associated with creatures rather than creator. The parallel claim that the First transcends intellect also fits well into Dionysian theology since it implies that thought cannot grasp God. Berthold enthusiastically accepts all these consequences, concluding that man's relationship with God must culminate in mystical union with the divine, rather than in knowledge of being itself'. For Berthold of Moosburg however, King (2016) 1–2 notes that he does not fit into the standard Thomist/anti-Thomist opposition, as might be applied for Dietrich of Freiburg, but instead Berthold places himself within the more ancient philosophical opposition between Aristotelianism and Platonism.

Proclus on the issue of causal relation and transcendence brought out and repeated within these different contexts.

#### 1.4 The Focus of This Study

In recent scholarship, Damascius' position has been construed as either concluding a typical late Neoplatonist move of positing extra intermediaries,<sup>68</sup> or implying that he accepts epistemic skepticism about first principles in general.<sup>69</sup> The first claim would imply that the Ineffable is a superfluous principle, since the One, by itself, should be sufficient to account for the transcendence and causality implied in being a first principle. The second claim would implicitly be an inversion of the first, namely that what counts as 'the One' has only been a subjective concept attained by the soul, while the 'real' principle (the Ineffable) lies beyond any framework for metaphysics.<sup>70</sup> Yet neither of these

68 Among this group is Opsomer (2013) and Van Riel (2017). I discuss this position in Ch. 5 (5.3.4).

69 Among multiple candidates for this are Rappe (2010) (1998), Cürsgen (2007), Galperine (in Damascius (1987), esp. 26–35), and Hoffmann (1997). For Rappe, Damascius' discussion of the Ineffable is meant as an abandonment of a propositional way of doing metaphysics, as one finds in Proclus' framework; the thesis about the inadequacy of discursive thought is brought out more in her chapter on Damascius in Rappe (2000) 197–230. (Cf. 125 n.23.) For Hoffmann, Damascius' framework implies the impossibility for doing negative theology (385): the 'ineffable', rather than being a name by which the One is 'hymned' and honored (as in Proclus), instead indicates a limit in Damascius beyond which the soul cannot pass in the attempt to appropriate the first principle (388–390). Cürsgen sees Damascius as anticipating Kant, insofar as Damascius emphasizes the gap between human knowledge and the principles in themselves—implied in Damascius' distinction between the One and the Ineffable (321–322): for Cürsgen, Damascius appears to say that we impose concepts on principles like the One and the Ineffable, which do not imply the content or entities behind those concepts. Galperine also appears to follow this line of thought in her conclusion on the Ineffable as more 'mystical' than a metaphysical principle (31). Although not completely belonging to the above-mentioned group, Metry-Tresson (2012), Tresson and Metry (2005), and Caluori (2018) partially fit this 'skeptical' interpretation vis-à-vis considering Damascius' use of *aporiai* as a method for metaphysics. Metry-Tresson in particular focuses on Damascius' use of aporetic arguments to reveal, through the experience of the arguments and their structure, the principles in question; despite the similarity in approach, Metry-Tresson de-emphasizes the skeptical interpretation (see e.g. 25) as above. (Cf. O'Meara (2004) 204–206 for a similar approach.) I discuss this position while analyzing Damascius on the Ineffable below in Ch. 5 (5.3).

70 As in, for instance, Ahbel-Rappe (1998) 362: 'Despite his Sceptical affiliations, Damascius ends his *Doubts and Solutions* with a theological testimony to the truth of his unorthodox, his metaphysics of the Ineffable (C-W, [DP] III. 161). [...] Damascius writes for those



claims takes account of Damascius' causal framework, both in general and in the case of the One, and further they do not address how Damascius fits alongside Proclus in addressing the tension of the first approach with early Neoplatonists: namely the One as analogous to the Forms' causality, thus as anticipating the plurality it produces.<sup>71</sup> In this light the issue of causal synonymy is key to understanding why Damascius distinguishes the Ineffable and the One.

As this study will attempt to show, while Damascius appropriates Proclus' framework, he makes certain, radical revisions in the causal structure of higher principles to account for both issues of causality and transcendence that Proclus himself attempts to address with mixed results. In particular, Proclus tries to maintain the balance between the One's complete transcendence and its causality by positing the 'henads'. Yet one of the main tensions in Proclus is explaining how they emerge from the One in their varying characters (*ιδιότητες*), where the One has no relation to all things—including the characters differentiating each henad. It is this crucial gap in causality that motivates Damascius' major revision for the One and its causality, where such a relation is permitted between the One and the characters pertaining to the henads, since, for Damascius, the One is synonymous with its effect of all things—and finally what leads Damascius to posit the Ineffable. It is ultimately this aspect in Damascius, and in turn Proclus, that has not been addressed in the scholarship, and which this study will focus on in detail.

With this in mind, we may now summarize how we will proceed in the following chapters. *Chapter 1* establishes the background to which both Proclus and Damascius are responding with their frameworks. In *Section 1.1* we look at Plotinus' motivation to establish pure unity as the nature of the first cause: namely, if the first is an intellect or a being of some kind, it implies the plurality of the Forms that it either contains or produces. This leads to Plotinus' radical claim that the One's status is 'beyond being' in a strict sense, thus not an intellect as the majority of his Middle Platonic predecessors would claim. Yet as we will see, Plotinus' construal of the One implies a two-sided aspect: in itself the One contains no plurality, yet since it directly produces plurality, and

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who belong to the tradition but whose intellectual activity impedes their progress. For such people, the only way to remove doubt is to remove human thought altogether'.

71 In this vein of placing Damascius alongside his predecessors, cf. Van Riel (2010) 671: 'Damascius' commentaries are not so much commentaries on the classical authors, Plato and Aristotle themselves, as they are 'commentaries on the commentaries', especially those of Proclus. Thus, Damascius' commentaries consist of discussions with earlier positions that were themselves aimed at integrating older discussions'. Van Riel's description also aptly applies to the collection of *aporiai* in Damascius' *De Principiis*.

since it acts as a paradigm of Intellect and Being, the One internally implies attributes that are correlated with plurality and pertain to Intellect and Being. In *Sections 1.2–1.3* we look at the reception of Plotinus in Porphyry and Iamblichus, where one finds the consequences of Plotinus' position made explicit in both successors—even in the case of Iamblichus who anticipates Proclus and later Neoplatonists by adding intermediate principles between the One and Intellect. We end with Proclus' master, Syrianus, in *Section 1.4*, where the latter establishes the foundation for Proclus' understanding of the One, and the causal framework that supports responding to the tensions implied in the previous Plotinian frameworks for the One.

The remaining chapters are then split into two groups: the first (*Chapters 2–3*) focuses on the general causal frameworks for Proclus and Damascius, which respectively inform how each construes the One's causality; and the second (*Chapters 4–5*) focuses specifically on the One's causality and the important correlation of participated principles, for Proclus, and the Ineffable, for Damascius.

In *Chapter 2*, we consider the distinction between unparticipated and participated entities as crucial for Proclus' response to the tensions implied in Plotinus' causal model. Proclus builds this distinction on his understanding that productive causes produce intermediate entities that convey the producer's effect while they also mirror the participant's nature. This distinction applies both between (for instance) each individual soul and its participating body, and more generally between the first, unparticipated cause of a property to individual, distinct participants. This balances both the transcendence of the cause—insofar as it is unaffected in itself by the participant(s)—while causal synonymy is still maintained—insofar as the intermediaries themselves reflect the character of their prior causes.

*Chapter 3* shows how Damascius' causal framework is built as a response to difficulties raised in cases of dissimilar causation from Proclus' framework, like the derivation of Intellect from Being, which breaks the principle of causal synonymy. This leads Damascius to hold that synonymy cannot obtain only between the cause and its intermediaries, as in Proclus, but it must include the final effect: in other words, to produce Intellect the principle of Being must ultimately become like Intellect. Damascius thus introduces a fundamental modification for causation: that in producing an effect, causes 'act on themselves' in the causal process. Thus two stages are posited for productive entities: in themselves they transcend their effects—thus they are not causal in this sense—but in the causal process, the producer *in itself* becomes synonymous with the effect as its cause. This leads to a major revision of Proclus' distinction between unparticipated/participated causes, as well as the notion

of self-constitution: while Damascius keeps these causal distinctions, they indicate a progressive separation of unity and being, from higher, ‘concentrated’ causes to lower, ‘unfolded’ effects.

*Chapter 4* begins by focusing on Proclus’ proof for the One, where compared to Plotinus’ proof, Proclus distinguishes between two notions of prior unity: one that implies plurality ‘by participation’ (κατὰ μέθεξιν), and one that is beyond the direct participation with plurality—both of which respectively correspond to the distinction between participated and unparticipated. Thus, Proclus’ understanding of henads, as unities after the One that are plural ‘by participation’, is a major factor to account for the One’s causality. Alongside the henads, Proclus also poses the Limit and Unlimited as intermediaries between the One and beings, so they also fulfill the same intermediary role that the henads perform. A number of questions emerge about the relation between the two, but a fundamental issue at stake is this: what accounts for the henads’ distinction? Even if the Limit and Unlimited become responsible for this, how one accounts for their emergence after the One becomes a crucial tension in Proclus’ framework. This tension then suggests an opposite problem to the one implied in Plotinus and his successors: the One may be transcendent and cause unity, but in what way it brings about plurality (at least corresponding to the henads) is unclear.

Finally in *Chapter 5*, we first consider Damascius’ *aporia* on the first principle’s relation to all things in the beginning of the *De Principiis*. Damascius’ notion of the One as in a ‘coordination’ (σύνταξις) with all things—even if it is not strictly identified with ‘all things’ as its cause—follows on his notion of causal synonymy, as indicated in *Chapter 3*: if the One truly causes ‘all things’, it must be synonymous with ‘all things’ as a cause, or as Damascius says, it is ‘itself all things’ (πάντα αὐτὸ). Since the notion of a ‘principle’ (ἀρχή) implies priority to the effects, whereas the notion of a ‘cause’ implies being the same in kind as the effects—and therefore *with* the effects—this leads Damascius to assert that the proper ‘principle’ cannot be the One but rather a truly non-causal principle: the Ineffable. Damascius then treats the Ineffable not as a skeptical conclusion, but instead as a grounding principle by which the One functions as the first cause. This allows Damascius to maintain the One’s causality of unity *and* plurality, solving the causal gap between the One and the henads in Proclus by affirming the One’s causal relation to plurality. This move, however, is made possible only by distinguishing the principle of absolute transcendence apart from the One—i.e. the Ineffable—which in turn implies its own tensions when assessing the Ineffable as a ‘principle’ within the metaphysical hierarchy.

On the whole, this work attempts to place Proclus and Damascius within the general Neoplatonic (and by proxy, overarching Platonic) tradition by asking,

in a nutshell: what justifies Proclus in positing the One as unparticipated? And what justifies Damascius in positing the Ineffable, if not Proclus' One? The answer for both, we find, is an attempt to solve the tension of transcendence and causal relation for the first principle. Both Proclus and Damascius begin with the same structure, yet they diverge in the manner in which one can or cannot ascribe causality to the first as a result of their respective understanding of causality in general.

## The Background to Proclus and Damascius

The issues faced by Proclus and Damascius for the first principle go back to the very beginning of the Neoplatonic tradition with Plotinus and his formulation of the first principle as the One. For Plotinus and all subsequent Neoplatonists, the One transcends Being and all beings as their cause: it cannot be characterized by any attributes which pertain to Being, chief among which is plurality. Yet this gives rise to the basic tension faced by all Neoplatonists: while transcending its effects, the One as the first cause must pre-contain what it produces. Hence, it must pre-contain, in some sense, plurality and all the other attributes of Being as their cause, while not itself being a plurality or in any sense like Being and other beings. Balancing the One's transcendence and causality becomes one of the central perennial issues faced for all Neoplatonists and philosophers influenced by this line of thought.

As we will see after this chapter, this ultimately motivates Proclus' and Damascius' respective positions to maintain a hard distance between the first principle and Being: for Proclus this must be the One as unparticipated, and for Damascius this must be the Ineffable rather than the One. To understand what leads us to both figures' refined positions, we should first see the common foundation laid by Plotinus and his successors, especially Porphyry and Iamblichus, inasmuch as the latter become the intermediaries to which Proclus and Damascius directly respond.

We will first start with Plotinus in Section 1.1 and see how he comes to assert the One as the first principle over Intellect, and how his description of the One as the 'power of all things' (δύναμις πάντων) leads to the possibility for postulating the One as paradigmatic of Intellect's being. And in Sections 1.2–1.3 we will see how Porphyry and Iamblichus, as Plotinus' successors, adapt his formulation of the One, as both 'one'-only *ad extra* and characterized by plurality *ad intra*. As we will see, the reception of Plotinus' framework in these latter figures becomes an important background for Proclus in establishing a new understanding of causality to support the One's transcendence over—and causality of—all things. In turn, this also gives us the background to see how Damascius represents a return back to Plotinus (via Iamblichus), while also radically transforming Proclus' framework.

## 1.1 Plotinus

Among Plotinus' many arguments for the One throughout the *Enneads*, one we find is his emphasis on the One's independence in certain, specific respects: namely the One does not imply dependence on parts; lacks mixture with the effects after it; and thereby does not imply potentiality in any sense. The formulation is loosely similar to Aristotle's argument for the unmoved mover as the first cause in *Metaphysics* Λ.6–9, where Aristotle shows that the principle must always be in act (ἐνέργεια) and without matter and potentiality.<sup>1</sup> For Aristotle, these criteria imply that the principle is an intellect that thinks itself.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as the principle must be simple, Plotinus certainly agrees with Aristotle, alongside various prior Middle Platonists, yet he departs from this view in two ways: first, by arguing that intellection *inherently* implies duality, and second, that any kind of intellect implies a principle that is *not* such. This final view comes about when Plotinus evaluates how unity is a pre-condition for all Forms and entities, and that it eventually leads to an entity that is simply pure unity.

We see the start of this argument in *Ennead* v.4.1 with Plotinus' definition of simplicity as the ground for all composed beings:

For there must be something before all things—this being simple—and [it must be] something distinct from the things which come after it, existing by itself, not mixed with the things which are from it, and again able to be present in a different way to the other things, being really one (ὄντως ἓν)—and not a different being and then one—according to which it is false even to say that it is 'one',<sup>3</sup> and there is no account or knowledge of it. It is indeed also said to be beyond being (ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας): for if it will not to be simple, outside all coincidence and composition and really one, it could not be a principle. And it is the most self-sufficient (αὐταρκέστατον), being simple and the first among all things: for that which is not the first is in need of that which is before it, and what is not simple is in need of the simple things in it (τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπλῶν), so that it can come into existence from them.<sup>4</sup>

*Enn.* v.4.1, 5–15

1 Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.6, esp. 1071b12–31.

2 Cf. Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.9, 1075a5–10.

3 Cf. Plato, *Parm.* 141e7 ff.

4 Compare this passage with Plotinus, *Enn.* v.6.4, esp. 1–11, where 'one' and 'simple' (ἀπλοῦς) are contrasted: Intellect is 'one' as is the Good/One, but only the One is 'simple'. All subsequent citations of *Enn.* in this section are from Plotinus.

δεῖ μὲν γάρ τι πρὸ πάντων εἶναι—ἀπλοῦν τοῦτο—καὶ πάντων ἕτερον τῶν μετ' αὐτό, ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ὄν, οὐ μεμιγμένον τοῖς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάλιν ἕτερον τρόπον τοῖς ἄλλοις παρεῖναι δυνάμενον, ὄν ὄντως ἔν, οὐχ ἕτερον ὄν, εἴτα ἔν, καθ' οὗ ψευδὸς καὶ τὸ ἔν εἶναι, οὐ μὴ λόγος μηδὲ ἐπιστήμη, ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐπέκεινα λέγεται εἶναι οὐσίας—εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἀπλοῦν ἔσται συμβάσεως ἕξω πάσης καὶ συνθέσεως καὶ ὄντως ἔν, οὐκ ἂν ἀρχὴ εἴη—αὐταρκέστατόν τε τῷ ἀπλοῦν εἶναι καὶ πρῶτον ἀπάντων· τὸ γὰρ τὸ μὴ πρῶτον ἐνδεὲς τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ, τό τε μὴ ἀπλοῦν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπλῶν δεόμενον, ἵν' ᾗ ἕξ ἐκείνων.

Here four characteristics are brought out for the principle: (1) it must be simple (ἀπλός); (2) existing by itself (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ὄν); (3) not 'mixed' with what is after it; and (4) 'really one' (ὄντως ἔν). Plotinus draws support for these premises from the last lines of the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis, where the One 'in no way is' (οὐδαμῶς ἔστι τὸ ἔν) (141e9–10) since it does not partake in being, and *Republic* VI on the Good as 'beyond being' (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας),<sup>5</sup> which implies no relation to the beings after it. Plotinus uses both passages to imply a particularly negative interpretation of simplicity: not only does it mean a lack of parts, but also as not having 'being'—either οὐσία or εἶναι—attached to it, where οὐσία would imply parts. Plotinus' criteria thus suggest that the principle must lack 'metaphysical parts' of any kind,<sup>6</sup> which means affirming its absolute unity. Dominic O'Meara calls this the 'principle of prior simplicity', where simple entities must be prior to composed, non-simple entities.<sup>7</sup> This is one essential part of Plotinus' criteria, while simplicity follows from the One's nature as unity.

We see this brought out in *Enn.* VI.9, where Plotinus shows that the different levels of unity, beginning from physical objects, imply a chain of dependent causal relations that leads up the One. The early chapters in VI.9.1–2 focus on unity as a distinct, received attribute in beings, rather than as an accidental property of the form or structure of a being. Beginning with artificial objects in VI.9.1:

All beings are beings by unity (τῷ ἐνί),<sup>8</sup> both those which are primarily beings and those which are in any sense said to be in beings. For what

5 Cf. Plato, *Rep.* VI, 509b6–10.

6 To borrow a phrase from Cohoe (2017); see also 761 ff. for discussion of *Enn.* V.4.1, 5–15 above.

7 O'Meara (1993) 44–49. See Noble (2018), who offers an alternative to the conventional 'Priority of Unity' argument in passages like these, based rather on co-ordination: namely that the well-organized structures in the cosmos depend on a principle which orders those structures—ultimately the One, for Plotinus.

8 Here I generally translate ἔν or τὸ ἔν as 'unity' when the term is used as an attribute of an entity or entities (as in this context); when used as a predicate of an entity (e.g. 'X is ἔν') or

could anything be if it were not one? For if things are deprived of that which is called 'one', they are not those things. For neither does an army exist if it will not be one, nor a chorus nor a flock if they are not one. But neither can a house nor a ship exist if they do not contain their unity, since the house is one and so is the ship, which if they were to lose it, the house would no longer be a house nor the ship a ship. So then continuous magnitudes, if unity were not with them, would not exist; at any rate, if they are cut up, they change their being in proportion as they lose their unity.

*Enn.* VI.9.1, 1–10

πάντα τὰ ὄντα τῷ ἐνὶ ἑστίν ὄντα, ὅσα τε πρώτως ἐστίν ὄντα, καὶ ὅσα ὁπωσοῦν λέγεται ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν εἶναι. τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ εἴη, εἰ μὴ ἐν εἴη; ἐπεὶ περ ἀφαιρεθέντα τοῦ ἐν ὃ λέγεται οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκεῖνα. οὔτε γὰρ στρατὸς ἔστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν ἔσται, οὔτε χορὸς οὔτε ἀγέλη μὴ ἐν ὄντα. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ οἰκία ἢ ναὺς τὸ ἐν οὐκ ἔχοντα, ἐπεὶ περ ἡ οἰκία ἐν καὶ ἡ ναὺς, ὃ εἰ ἀποβάλλοι, οὔτ' ἂν ἡ οἰκία ἔτι οἰκία οὔτε ἡ ναὺς. τὰ τοίνυν συνεχῇ μεγέθει, εἰ μὴ τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς παρείη, οὐκ ἂν εἴη· τμηθέντα γοῦν, καθόσον τὸ ἐν ἀπόλλυσιν, ἀλλάσσει τὸ εἶναι.

Plotinus begins with artifacts for his example, which exhibit only a very loose sense of unity, but nevertheless imply formal unity in their makeup: the account of the army holds only insofar as the soldiers are ordered and brought together into whole, and therefore as a 'one'. In the same way, the house's form holds insofar as the bricks and stones are ordered in a certain shape and way to bring about the single house, rather than a disparate heap. This recalls Aristotle's own example of the house in *Metaphysics* Z–H, where the same point is made that the unity of the house, or the house's form, is what orders the matter of bricks and stones, where without the form the bricks and stones are a heap without a form.<sup>9</sup> As with Aristotle, Plotinus uses the artifacts example to illustrate the case for natural substances like plants and animals in *Enn.* VI.9.1, 11–14, where, if they were to be cut up or have a part chopped off, they would

in reference to a distinct principle (e.g. τὸ ἐν, τὸ ἐν [by itself], or τὸ αὐτόεν) I translate as 'one' or 'the One', depending on context. In general one should be wary of Plotinus' (and later Neoplatonists') use of ἐν/τὸ ἐν, inasmuch as it does not single out a specific existent entity, but can equally refer to unity, as found in existent beings, and unity taken by itself—which we will refer to as 'the One'. In this one should bear in mind the cautions of those like Edward Butler (e.g. (2005) 103) and Eric Perl (e.g. (2010b), esp. 171–174) in translating τὸ ἐν in a way that avoids 'hypostasizing' unity-itself or the One in the same sense as other entities within Being.

9 Aristotle, *Met.* Z.17, 1041a33–1041b16.



become different substances when they lose the property of unity.<sup>10</sup> We should notice that Plotinus, unlike Aristotle, does not reference the form (εἶδος, μορφή) as the cause of the substance's unity but rather *unity* itself, or 'their unity' for the respective case, and even when he refers to the substance of the plant or animal which is broken up, he subordinates it to the 'unity of the plant' or 'unity of the animal'. Plotinus thus gives more explanatory weight to unity *per se* rather than form (or even substance) as the prior cause for this ascending scale of unified kinds or types.<sup>11</sup> Unity as a property then becomes the *explanans* for entities.

The different relations between unity on the physical level, from 'loose' unities like artificial entities to 'stronger' unities like plants or animals, ultimately lead to the three principles of Soul, Intellect, and One, implicitly the principles responsible for distributing the effect of unity. Just as in the gradation of unity in the effects, the principles also exhibit a respectively ascending scale of unity. While subordinate principles like the Soul and Intellect (or the Forms in Intellect) explain the derivation of unity by virtue of their own respective unity, Plotinus eventually shows that all unity must come from a principle that is simply unity-itself—namely the One—as we saw above. Soul then cannot be one-only but only 'one' in a derivative sense, since the form and shape it imparts does not belong to it natively, but instead it 'looks' to what is 'one' and what is Form-itself (e.g. Man-itself) when it creates forms and unity in matter (e.g. a particular man).<sup>12</sup> Plotinus thus sticks with Platonic orthodoxy: Soul is not the first principle, since it mediates the Forms (as in the *Timaeus*) in creating enmattered beings.<sup>13</sup>

The next level up would then be the Forms themselves, considered within the principle, Intellect. In the following *Enn.* VI.9.2 Plotinus considers whether Intellect qualifies as unity-itself:

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- 10 With Plotinus' reference to natural substances that 'lose their unity' by being divided, Aristotle's example of a chopped-off or dead finger is useful to illustrate the point: the 'finger' is only such when it is part of the whole human, whereas if it were cut off, it no longer retains the account of a 'finger' but rather a dead piece of matter. Cf. Aristotle, *Met.* Z.10, 1035b21–25.
- 11 As noted in Armstrong and Schwyzer/Henry, *Enn.* VI.9.1, 1–14 borrows from the Stoic classification of descending degrees of unity: see e.g. *SVF* II 366–8, 1013. See also Meijer (1992b) 68–89 for further analysis of the Stoic background.
- 12 *Enn.* VI.9.1, 17–28. Plotinus also adds a second argument: Soul has multiple powers, or parts (per Platonic orthodoxy), which demonstrate that it is not a simple unity but a whole of parts (28–42). Cf. O'Meara (1993) 18–19.
- 13 See esp. Plato, *Tim.* 36e8–37c5.

Therefore is it then the case that, for each of the things which are one by part, its substance and unity are not the same thing, but, for being (τὸ ὄν) and substance (οὐσία) as a whole, substance and being and one are the same thing? So that anyone who has discovered being has discovered unity (τὸ ἓν), and substance itself is unity itself: for example, if intellect is substance, intellect is also one since it is primarily being and primarily one, and as it gives the other things a share in being, so in the same measure it also gives them a share in unity.

*Enn.* V.9.2, 1–8

ἀρ' οὖν ἐκάστω μὲν τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἓν οὐ ταῦτόν ἢ οὐσία αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ἓν, ὅλω δὲ τῷ ὄντι καὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ ταῦτόν ἢ οὐσία καὶ τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ἓν; ὥστε τὸν ἐξευρόντα τὸ ὄν ἐξευρηκέναι καὶ τὸ ἓν, καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτὸ εἶναι τὸ ἓν· οἶον, εἰ νοῦς ἢ οὐσία, νοῦν καὶ τὸ ἓν εἶναι πρῶτως ὄντα ὄν καὶ πρῶτως ἓν, μεταδιδόντα δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῦ εἶναι οὕτως καὶ κατὰ τοσοῦτον καὶ τοῦ ἑνός.

At this point Plotinus considers a position held by a majority of Middle Platonists, particularly Numenius and Alcinous,<sup>14</sup> that the first principle is equated with a divine intellect that contains and thinks the Forms. In this, both Plotinus and his predecessors generally accept Aristotle's view that divine νοῦς is simple and absolutely one, insofar as its activity of thinking is only toward itself and does not depend on anything outside itself.<sup>15</sup> Aristotle's formulation could be one reason why past Middle Platonists characterize the first principle as an intellect, as Plotinus' immediate predecessor Numenius. In the passage above, Plotinus initially grants that Intellect may be the first principle, as 'primary being' and 'primary unity'.<sup>16</sup>

This position, however, eventually proves futile: substance (οὐσία) and being (τὸ ὄν) both imply plurality, so that Intellect must also imply plurality. Plotinus first gives an example of the account of 'man', which can be broken up

14 For Alcinous, see *Didaskalikos* IX.2, 163,30–31, where he considers the first cause to be a divine intellect whose thoughts are the forms; cf. Boys-Stones (2017) 151–152. Numenius, by contrast, posits two intellects: a first intellect that thinks only itself, and a second intellect which thinks both itself and the Forms (similar to Alcinous' divine intellect). On this, see e.g. Numenius, Fr. 16; cf. Boys-Stones (2017) 156–157.

15 Cf. earlier n. 2.

16 This also follows a position from Aristotle, whereby the different senses of 'one' and 'being' are correlated with each other: see *Met.* 1.1–2, esp. 1053b24–1054a12. In the context of *Met.* 1, Aristotle seeks to deny the existence of a Platonist/Pythagorean 'one' or monad-itself, since for Aristotle substance takes priority among the other ten categories of being (cf.

into the components of its definition, 'rational' and 'living being', as well as its own characteristic form, 'man'. 'Man' thus implies parts, where unity does not, suggesting then that the unity of 'man' must be something participated.<sup>17</sup> This leads to two more general considerations: Intellect implies plurality since it contains the Forms and since the Forms themselves participate each other as distinct entities;<sup>18</sup> and Intellect's activity of thinking itself is a self-revertive activity, which implies duality.<sup>19</sup>

Coming from Aristotle, this last claim would be somewhat strange: if divine intellect does not think anything else other than itself, and if its thinking is always in act, then it would be just one.<sup>20</sup> Plotinus accepts these qualifications but still concludes that duality results for the following two reasons: (1) νοῦς distinguishes itself into (1a) a subject of thinking, and (1b) an object of thought, when it thinks itself as an object of thought;<sup>21</sup> and (2) ἐνέργεια for Plotinus implies motion,<sup>22</sup> which allows for Intellect to think the Forms within itself without potentiality or change implied<sup>23</sup> (as it otherwise would for Aristotle)<sup>24</sup>—but not for it to be absolutely 'one'. Both (1) and (2) are innovations upon Aristotle, where on his account no such process of distinction or duality is implied for the divine intellect, and ἐνέργεια does not imply motion but is rather opposed to it. Plotinus' reason to posit (1) follows on his assertion that all thinking necessitates distinction, where the lack of any distinction implies the impossibility of thought.<sup>25</sup> With (2), Plotinus attempts to accommodate the *Sophist's* five 'Great Kinds' (μέγιστα γένη), which Plato applies to the intelligible realm, with Aristotle's restriction that νοῦς is purely

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Aristotle, *Cat.* v, esp. 2a35–2b6). (For a treatment of *Met.* I as a whole, see Laura Castelli's commentary in Aristotle (2017).) Thus, if substance (οὐσία) is the first, grounding category of being, and if the Unmoved Mover is first by being fully in act, it follows that substance is also equally first in its unity. By contrast in the context of *Enn.* VI.9.1–2, Plotinus is implicitly responding to Aristotle by asserting that unity must be prior to being in itself, and thus cannot be correlated to being.

17 *Enn.* VI.9.2, 19–24.

18 *Enn.* VI.9.2, 21–32.

19 *Enn.* VI.9.2, 36–47.

20 See e.g. Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.7, 1072a30–35.

21 *Enn.* V.3.5, 36–49. Cf. Crystal (2002) 196–205 for an analysis of Plotinus' argument on self-intellection necessitating duality, even though it is numerically identical (τὰυτόν).

22 *Enn.* VI.2.15, 8–10; VI.2.7, 25–26. Cf. Emilsson (2007) 34–38 on the relation between Plotinus and Aristotle on ἐνέργεια and motion (κίνησις).

23 See *Enn.* VI.7.13, esp. 38–42, which argues that intellection necessitates motion, rather than rest, in thinking through different Forms.

24 See Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.9, 1075a7–10.

25 See *Enn.* V.6.1, 11–14.

in act (ἐνέργεια)—which would implicitly negate motion as one of the μέγιστα γένη.<sup>26</sup> For Aristotle, the divine intellect should neither think a plurality of objects nor any other object of thought than itself, unlike Intellect for Plotinus. Plotinus thus recognizes that, if Intellect is to contain the Forms altogether, and if thinking necessitates duality, Intellect can be only relatively ‘one’, and not absolutely ‘one’, by its nature. With these restrictions Plotinus concludes at the end of *VI.9.2*:

The One then will not be all things (τὰ πάντα), for so it would no longer be one; and it cannot be Intellect, for in this way it would be all things since Intellect is all things; and it cannot be Being (τὸ ὄν); for Being is all things.

*Enn.* *VI.9.2*, 44–47

οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ τὸ ἐν τὰ πάντα ἔσται, οὕτω γὰρ οὐκέτι ἐν εἴη· οὐδὲ νοῦς, καὶ γὰρ ὅν οὕτως εἴη τὰ πάντα τοῦ νοῦ τὰ πάντα ὄντος· οὐδὲ τὸ ὄν· τὸ γὰρ ὄν τὰ πάντα.

This conclusion ties in with Plotinus’ earlier position from *Enn.* *v.4.2* that what is simple must underlie non-simple items. One should also note here that Plotinus takes the phrase, ‘all things’, to be convertible with plurality, which is now associated with Intellect and Being. This will eventually be an issue Plotinus raises, where, if the One causes ‘all things’, it must somehow be related to it without being ‘all things’.<sup>27</sup>

If the One is not ‘all things’ (τὰ πάντα), its nature cannot reflect what pertains to ‘all things’—including thought, activity (ἐνέργεια),<sup>28</sup> form (or the Forms), or being.<sup>29</sup> Thus to give a causal account of the One means that we cannot appeal to terms or properties that apply from Being, but rather we

26 Plato, *Soph.* 254b–e; see Plotinus’ interpretation of the μέγιστα γένη for Intellect/Being in *Enn.* *VI.2.7–8* and *VI.2.15* (esp. lines 12–16). Cf. Crystal (2002) 194–196.

27 Although contrast with Porphyry, *Sent.* 10, where he affirms the opposite for the ‘Beyond’, that it is ‘all things’; discussed below in p. 44–45. As we will also see later on, Damascius even more centrally claims the One as being ‘all things’ (τὰ πάντα) since it causes all things.

28 See e.g. *Enn.* *VI.7.17*, 10–11.

29 *Enn.* *VI.9.3*, 37–45: ‘[The One] is not Intellect, but before Intellect. For Intellect is a certain thing among beings, but that [*scil.* the One] is not anything, but before each and every thing, and is not being; for being has a kind of shape of being (οἶον μορφὴν τὴν τοῦ ὄντος), but that has no shape, not even intelligible shape (μορφῆς νοητῆς). For since the nature of the One is generative of all things it is not any one of them. It is not then a particular entity, or qualified, or quantitative, or intellect, or soul; it is not in movement or rest, not in place, not in time, but ‘itself by itself of single form’ (αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μονοειδές), or rather formless, being before all form, before movement and before rest; for these pertain to

must provide an account ‘around’ (περί) the One, in other words from the side of the effects:<sup>30</sup>

How then do we give an account for ourselves about [the One]? We indeed say something about it, yet we certainly do not speak it, and we have neither knowledge nor thought of it. How then do we give an account of it, if we do not have it? If indeed we do not have it by knowledge, do we not even have it at all? Rather we have it in such a way that we speak about it, but do not speak it. For in fact we say what it is not, but we do not say what it is, so that we speak about it from the things after it.

*Enn.* v.3.14, 1–8

πῶς οὖν ἡμεῖς λέγομεν περὶ αὐτοῦ; ἢ λέγομεν μὲν τι περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐ μὴν αὐτὸ λέγομεν οὐδὲ γινώσκιν οὐδὲ νόησιν ἔχομεν αὐτοῦ. πῶς οὖν λέγομεν περὶ αὐτοῦ, εἰ μὴ αὐτὸ ἔχομεν; ἢ, εἰ μὴ ἔχομεν τῇ γνώσει, καὶ παντελῶς οὐκ ἔχομεν; ἀλλ’ οὕτως ἔχομεν, ὥστε περὶ αὐτοῦ μὲν λέγειν, αὐτὸ δὲ μὴ λέγειν. καὶ γὰρ λέγομεν, ὃ μὴ ἔστιν· ὃ δὲ ἔστιν, οὐ λέγομεν· ὥστε ἐκ τῶν ὑστερον περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγομεν.

The passage’s qualification that we give a causal explanation ‘about it’, i.e. that we ‘speak about it’ (περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγειν) but do not ‘speak it’ (αὐτὸ λέγειν), is significant, since this avoids implicating the One in plurality in a way that ‘speaking it’ does not—implicitly by using terms from the level of being. We can then have knowledge of the One, even though it is not grasped directly but rather externally from its effects.

This is brought out in passages like *Enn.* v.3.15, where Plotinus asks how the One can cause all things if it does not have ‘all things’ in itself. Plotinus first responds that what comes after the One cannot be like it but must be ‘deficient’, since it is not simply ‘one’:<sup>31</sup> consequently the ‘deficiency’ that results after the

being and are what make it many’. (οὐδὲ νοὺς τοίνυν, ἀλλὰ πρὸ νοῦ· τί γὰρ τῶν ὄντων ἔστιν ὁ νοῦς· ἐκεῖνο δὲ οὐ τι, ἀλλὰ πρὸ ἐκάστου, οὐδὲ ὄν· καὶ γὰρ τὸ ὄν οἶον μορφὴν τὴν τοῦ ὄντος ἔχει, ἄμορφον δὲ ἐκεῖνο καὶ μορφῆς νοητῆς. γεννητικὴ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ ἐνός φύσις οὕσα τῶν πάντων οὐδὲν ἔστιν αὐτῶν. οὔτε οὖν τι οὔτε ποιὸν οὔτε ποσὸν οὔτε νοῦν οὔτε ψυχὴν· οὐδὲ κινούμενον οὐδ’ αὖ ἐστῶς, οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ, οὐκ ἐν χρόνῳ, (ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μονοειδές), μᾶλλον δὲ ἀνειδέον πρὸ εἶδους ὃν παντός, πρὸ κινήσεως, πρὸ στάσεως· ταῦτα γὰρ περὶ τὸ ὄν, ἃ πολλὰ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ.) For the phrase, ‘itself by itself of single form’, cf. Plato, *Symposium* 211b1. Cf. *Enn.* v1.7.17, 4: ‘It is not necessary that a thing possesses what it will give’. (ἢ οὐκ ἀνάγκη, ὃ τις δίδωσι, τοῦτο ἔχειν.)

30 In this respect, even ascribing ‘cause’ to the One can only apply strictly from ‘our’ side: cf. *Enn.* vi.9.3, 49–55.

31 One can compare Plotinus’ approach to Aristotle’s use of the Pythagorean table of opposites in the unmoved mover’s case, between what is better and worse in *Met.* Λ.7,

One is a 'one-many' (ἐν πολλά).<sup>32</sup> One way to interpret this is that the effect of the One—namely Intellect—is the 'content' of the One in a 'deficient' state.<sup>33</sup> One can see this later in Plotinus' characterization of the One as the 'power of all things':

But that which comes after the principle is in some way under the full weight of the One, all things by participation in the One, and [all] whatsoever of it is both all and one. What then are 'all things'? We say those things of which that One is the principle. But how is that One the principle of all things? Is it therefore because as one it preserves them, making each of them to be? We say also because it brought them into existence. But how did it do so? We say by possessing them beforehand (πρότερον). But it has been said that in this way it will be a plurality. But it thus had them in such a way as not to be distinct, while they had been distinguished in the second [principle] by rational account (τῷ λόγῳ). For this is already actuality (ἐνέργεια), but the One is the power of all things (δύναμις πάντων). [...] How then does the One make what it does not have? For it does not do so by chance, nor by reflecting on what it will make, but all the same it will make.

*Enn.* v.3.15, 24–33; 35–37

τὸ δὲ μετὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ὧδέ πως ἐπιβρίσαντος τοῦ ἐνὸς πάντα μετέχον τοῦ ἑν, καὶ ὅτι οὖν αὐτοῦ πάντα αὐτὸ καὶ ἑν. τίνα οὖν πάντα; ἢ ὧν ἀρχὴ ἐκεῖνο. πῶς δὲ ἐκεῖνο ἀρχὴ τῶν πάντων; ἄρα, ὅτι αὐτὰ σφάζει ἐν ἑκάστων αὐτῶν ποιήσασα εἶναι; ἢ καὶ ὅτι ὑπέστησεν αὐτά. πῶς δὲ; ἢ τῷ πρότερον ἔχειν αὐτά. ἀλλ' εἴρηται, ὅτι πλῆθος οὕτως ἔσται. ἀλλ' ἄρα οὕτως εἶχεν ὡς μὴ διακεκριμένα· τὰ δ' ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ διεκρίτο τῷ λόγῳ. ἐνέργεια γὰρ ἦδη· τὸ δὲ δύναμις πάντων. ... πῶς οὖν ποιεῖ ἃ μὴ ἔχει; οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἔτυχε· μὴ δ' ἐνθυμηθεὶς ὁ ποιήσει, ποιήσει ὁμοῦ.

Plotinus establishes the One's status as the 'potency' or 'power' of all things (δύναμις πάντων) from the premise that, first, 'all things' are under the 'full weight'

1072a30–35: there, the object of thought falls on the 'better' side, and simple substance is among the higher, 'better' kinds in the table. Cf. Elders (1972) 168–169. The flip side with Plotinus is that what comes *after* the best, i.e. the One, must be worse, as on the opposite side of the table.

32 *Enn.* v.3.15, 1–12.

33 See *Enn.* v.3.11, where Plotinus characterizes Intellect's attempt at unity as a kind of failing when it 'sees' itself, by which plurality is entailed. Cf. *Enn.* 111.8.11, esp. 1–11, 16–25, where Intellect is characterized a 'trace' of the Good (ἵχνος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ), since it is completed and given form by the Good.

of the One by participating in it—suggesting that the One is responsible for the ‘content’ of Intellect; and second, that the One does ‘possess’ all things, but without the division which comes about after it. This leads Plotinus to characterize the difference between the One and ‘all things’, or Intellect, in terms of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*, where the *ἐνέργεια* of all things is then plurality and distinction. The One as a *δύναμις* then implies that it is not *directly* plurality, but that it is potentially ‘all things’ as a cause. In this respect, Plotinus’ characterization of the relation between the One and Intellect parallels his explanation of the Forms’ causal relation to their participants, where both the One and the Forms lack the differentiating character that defines their participants.<sup>34</sup>

### 1.1.1 *The One as Anticipating Intellect’s Nature*

Plotinus’ characterization of the One as the ‘power of all things’ gives it a causal connection to plurality, while it also safeguards the One from plurality inasmuch as it is not plurality in act.<sup>35</sup> In this respect, Plotinus’ characterization of the One is directly analogous to the Forms’ causality: namely, the Forms produce their effect in multiple participants by being ‘formless’ relative to their participants, or in other words by not being characterized by the particular form of any one participant or another. Similarly the One also produces the many Forms by being formless in relation to them, inasmuch as it is not characterized by any specific Form as each exists in act.<sup>36</sup> However this would still suggest a continuity between the One and ‘all things’ in a similar way to that between the Forms and their participants, such that it raises a tension: does

34 *Enn.* VI.7.32, 6–10. See also D’Ancona Costa (1996) 373: ‘The production of the multiplicity of intelligible Forms by the One is not, therefore, an alternative kind of production in respect to the communication of unity, but a different analysis of the way in which supra-sensible principles operate. When we consider the One as the principle of the unity of all the things which are, we are looking at the relationship of similitude which is involved in the pattern of eidetic causality. When we ask how the One can generate the multiplicity of Forms, and Plotinus answers that it occurs because of the One’s being separated from all the Forms and formless in respect to them, we have before us the Plotinian answer to the paradox of self-predication, extended to the relationship between the set of the Forms and their principle.’

35 Although compare with passages where Plotinus sharply denies that the One is ‘all things’, as suggested earlier—for instance, *Enn.* VI.9.2, 44–47 (earlier quoted), and implicitly in *Enn.* V.2.1, 5–7: ‘It is because there is nothing in it that all things come from it: in order that being may exist, the One is not being, but the generator of being’ (trans. D’Ancona).

36 So D’Ancona Costa (1996) argues, esp. in 370–374. See in particular, p. 374: ‘To admit that the variety of the Forms in their actuality, *ἐνέργεια*, comes from the *δύναμις* of the One-formless is tantamount to admitting that the One possesses them beforehand, as all the possible rational criteria for beauty are implied in the Beautiful in itself.’



this mean that the One contains an incipient, internal plurality? In other passages Plotinus appears to suggest this when he ascribes certain attributes manifested in Intellect to the One: for instance, attributes such as self-thinking, self-causation, actuality, and being intelligible.

In *Enn.* v.4.2 the issue arises when Plotinus returns to Intellect's subordination to the One. There, Plotinus again shows why Intellect cannot be the first principle, but this time he characterizes the subordination in terms of the priority of the intelligible, or object of thought, in relation to Intellect. Plotinus equates the One with the intelligible, which stands in contrast to his denial of the One as an object of knowledge in *Enn.* v.3.13<sup>37</sup> since this implies plurality. In the case of v.4.2, Plotinus modifies the sense of the term, 'intelligible', to indicate Intellect's dependence on a principle that is the condition for Intellect's ability to think itself:

But how does this Intellect come from the intelligible? For the intelligible remains by itself and is not in need, like that which sees and thinks—I call that which thinks 'in need' (ἐνδεές) as compared to [the intelligible]. It is not like something senseless, but all things belong to it, are in it, and with it. It is completely penetrative (διακριτικόν) of itself; [it has] life in itself, and all things in itself, and the introspection (κατανόησις) of itself is itself, as if it exists by self-perception in everlasting rest, and it will think differently from that which is according to the thinking of Intellect. [...] Since, then, it abides as intelligible, that which comes to be does so as thinking (νόησις): and since it is thinking and thinks that from which it came to be—for it possesses nothing else—it becomes intellect, like another intelligible and like that principle, both a representation (μίμημα) and image (εἰδωλον) of it.

*Enn.* v.4.2, 12–19; 22–26

ἀλλὰ πῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ ὁ νοῦς οὖτος; τὸ νοητὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένον καὶ οὐκ ὄν ἐνδεές, ὥσπερ τὸ ὁρῶν καὶ τὸ νοοῦν—ἐνδεές δὲ λέγω τὸ νοοῦν ὡς πρὸς ἐκεῖνο—οὐκ ἔστιν οἷον ἀναίσθητον, ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ, πάντη διακριτικὸν ἑαυτοῦ, ζῶν ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἡ κατανόησις αὐτοῦ αὐτὸ οἶον εἰς συναισθήσει οὖσα ἐν στάσει αἰδίῳ καὶ νοήσει ἐτέρως ἢ κατὰ

37 See esp. *Enn.* v.3.13, 9–12: 'For we make it many when we make it [*scil.* the One] an object of knowledge and knowledge, and by attributing thought to it we make it need thought: even if thought were to be together with it, thought would be superfluous to it'. (πολὺ γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιοῦμεν γνωστὸν καὶ γνώσιν ποιοῦντες καὶ διδόντες νοεῖν δεῖσθαι τοῦ νοεῖν ποιοῦμεν καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὸ νοεῖν ᾗ, περιττὸν ἔσται αὐτῷ τὸ νοεῖν.)



τὴν νοῦ νόησιν. [...] ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐκεῖνο μένει νοητόν, τὸ γινόμενον γίνεται νόησις· νόησις δὲ οὐσα καὶ νοοῦσα ἄφ' οὗ ἐγένετο—ἄλλο γὰρ οὐκ ἔχει—νοῦς γίγνεται, ἄλλο οἷον νοητόν καὶ οἷον ἐκεῖνο καὶ μίμημα καὶ εἶδωλον ἐκείνου.

Plotinus' language of Intellect as a 'representation' and 'image' of its source follows the pattern of causality we have seen: that of which it is an image must then be a superior version of what Intellect is. Here Plotinus makes a parallel between the character of Intellect and the prior object of thought, or the One: both think themselves, both are 'all things' or contain all things, and both are intelligible. What distinguishes the One-*qua*-intelligible is that its own 'thinking' does not lead to an internal distinction itself, as was implied for the activity of thinking in v.3.15. Here Plotinus posits an identity between the One's being and its self-thinking, in contrast to Intellect's 'weak' identity between its being (or rather unity) and its own self-thinking. Plotinus says that the 'intelligible' in this case is absolutely simple, compared to Intellect which is characterized by plurality.<sup>38</sup>

Given this, if the divide between the One and Intellect lies in plurality for the latter, while attributes like activity (ἐνέργεια), thinking (νοεῖν), and so on also imply plurality, then *Enn.* v.4.2's account of the One presents a problem: Plotinus appears to sneak a hidden plurality into the One by it having a kind of thinking and activity, even if he claims that these attributes do not suggest dependence as in Intellect's case. Plotinus does not address the issue in that context, but he is aware of the hidden tension: on the one hand, if the One explains Intellect's plurality, it should not have those attributes. Yet if we are to give a sufficient causal account, the One must anticipate the characters it brings about. This, of course, becomes the central issue we find in the main characters of our study, especially in Damascius essentially linking the One with its effect of 'all things' (τὰ πάντα).

Plotinus directly addresses this issue in *Enn.* vi.8.7–21 within the context of a question about the cause of self-determination in beings.<sup>39</sup> Up to *Enn.* vi.8.6 Plotinus shows that self-determination must be free from all chance or possibility

38 See also *Enn.* v.6.2, 7–12, implicitly referring to the One as 'pure object of thought' (καθαρῶς νοητοῦ).

39 It should be noted that *Enn.* vi.8 is an unusual treatise among Plotinus' other treatises, and one which has been the subject of dispute in how to read the One's nature among the other treatises—for instance, a liberal approach is suggested in secondary literature like Gerson (1994) (esp. 12–18), where the positive attributes of vi.8.13 ff. are treated together with the other, negative attributes of other treatises without discrimination. I attempt to approach this treatise in light of other, more restrictive treatises, like *Enn.* v.3, yet one must be aware of this caution.

for passivity or undergoing anything that is outside one's power, which leads him to conclude, at least initially, that Intellect is completely self-determined.<sup>40</sup> Even if Intellect still depends on the Good, Plotinus concludes that Intellect's unity of activity (ἐνέργεια) and being (οὐσία) results in it being fully self-determined, and therefore the soul's attainment of Intellect implies full self-determination.<sup>41</sup> In vi.8.7, Plotinus raises an objection: if the Good is that about which Intellect determines itself, then what about the Good itself? If it has no prior principle, then it would appear to be by chance, and if so, then—paradoxically—it would not determine itself but rather would be the result of chance.<sup>42</sup>

Plotinus' strategy to deal with this is two-fold: first, he shows that any such language that attempts to 'posit' the Good, or One, falls into the domain of being, which fails to describe the One's nature—as we have just seen—so that only negations properly apply to the One.<sup>43</sup> By implication, the objection then has no force because it cannot even be raised, where there is no relation that can be applied to the One, including considering it as 'by chance' or if even self-determined. Yet Plotinus considers that the objection is still worth answering, and this brings in his second strategy of using positive language which departs from 'speaking correctly' (ὀρθῶς εἰρηται) about the One in order to persuade the objector.<sup>44</sup> Such 'incorrect' language in this sense necessitates qualifying the words or phrases for terms that directly import plurality into their meaning. Plotinus then justifies his language on the basis that all things which have self-determination draw on the Good for their power, so that the Good's nature must be paradigmatic of the effects after it.<sup>45</sup> We can see this just before Plotinus brings in the qualifier, 'as if' (ὡς εἰ), to clarify such speech:

It is necessary for the choice and willing of itself to be comprehended in the existence (ὑποστάνει) of the Good, or it would hardly be possible for anything else to find itself satisfactory; they are satisfied with themselves by their participation in or imagination of the Good. But one must go along with words, if in speaking of that Good one uses of necessity expressions to indicate it which we do not allow to be used, strictly speaking; but one should understand 'as if' (ὡς εἰ) for each of them.

*Enn.* vi.8.13, 43–50

<sup>40</sup> *Enn.* vi.8.4, esp. 29–40.

<sup>41</sup> See generally *Enn.* vi.8.5–6.

<sup>42</sup> *Enn.* vi.8.7, 11–16.

<sup>43</sup> *Enn.* vi.8.8, 13–28.

<sup>44</sup> *Enn.* vi.8.13, 1–5.

<sup>45</sup> See *Enn.* vi.8.13, 12–24.

ἐν δὲ τῇ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὑποστάσει ἀνάγκη τὴν αἴρεσιν καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν ἐμπεριειλημμένην εἶναι ἢ σχολῇ γ' ἂν ἄλλω ὑπάρχοντι ἑαυτῷ ἄρεστῳ εἶναι, ἃ μετουσίᾳ ἢ ἀγαθοῦ φαντασίᾳ ἀρέσκεται αὐτοῖς. δεῖ δὲ συγχωρεῖν τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, εἴ τις περὶ ἐκείνου λέγων ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐνδείξεως ἕνεκα αὐτοῖς χρήται, ἃ ἀκριβεῖα οὐκ ἔωμεν λέγεσθαι· λαμβανέντω δὲ καὶ τὸ οἶον ἐφ' ἐκάστου.

This leads Plotinus to phrases later that, normally, would imply plurality: the One ‘makes’ or causes itself;<sup>46</sup> is ‘father’ (πατήρ) of cause and causal being (οὐσίας αἰτιώδους),<sup>47</sup> or ‘cause of the cause’ (αἴτιον τοῦ αἰτίου),<sup>48</sup> the ‘paradigm’ (οἶον παράδειγμα) of things without chance;<sup>49</sup> and ‘activity above Intellect’ (ἐνέργεια ὑπὲρ νοῦν);<sup>50</sup> an ‘activity of itself’ (ἐνέργημα αὐτός);<sup>51</sup> pre-containing the causes of all things within itself;<sup>52</sup> and finally ἐνέργεια by itself (πρῶτον ἂν ἐνέργεια εἴη).<sup>53</sup> Many of these attributes parallel those in Intellect, especially terms such as being primarily ἐνέργεια, as pre-containing the causes of all things (to the same degree that Intellect pre-contains all the Forms), and so on. Rather unlike *Enn.* v.4.2, Plotinus in *Enn.* vi.8 does not ascribe thinking or intelligibility to the One when he speaks in the context of ‘persuasion’ from vi.8.13 onward. Yet this would match the context, since Plotinus is focusing specifically on how the One is a paradigm of self-determination, which involves speaking in terms of ‘actuality’ or ‘activity’ (ἐνέργεια). Plotinus then phrases positive attributes like ἐνέργεια in such a way that the One’s freedom and self-determination is affirmed, while the descriptions also concord with the One’s unity. For instance he asserts that a proper characterization of the One is as an ἐνέργεια before οὐσία, where ἐνέργεια normally implies the ἐνέργεια of an οὐσία or an existent (ὑπόστασις).<sup>54</sup> Intellect is also characterized by ἐνέργεια, but Plotinus notes that the One’s ἐνέργεια does not imply οὐσία as it does for Intellect. Thus, while Intellect is fully self-determined insofar as it is simultaneously in act and

46 E.g. *Enn.* vi.8.13, 53–55.

47 *Enn.* vi.8.14, 37–38.

48 *Enn.* vi.8.18, 37–40.

49 *Enn.* vi.8.14, 39. Cf. Proclus’ reference to an unnamed figure who holds that the One is a ‘paradigm of paradigms’ (παράδειγμα παραδειγμάτων) in *In Parm.* 1107,12–13.

50 *Enn.* vi.8.16, 35.

51 *Enn.* vi.8.16, 17.

52 *Enn.* vi.8.18, 36–42.

53 *Enn.* vi.8.20, 13–15.

54 *Enn.* vi.8.20, 9–16. This also goes with the previous vi.8.19, 13–20, where the One generates being (οὐσία) but is not a ‘slave’ to being, or to itself or its own ‘being’ (cf. v.2.1, 5–7). The force of this seems to be that, because the One generates οὐσία (i.e. Intellect), it does not pre-contain or depend on the being it generates. So in that sense it is ‘free’.

being-itself, it lacks *simply* being in act in the same way as the One. This is at any rate one counterpart for Plotinus' description of the One in active terms.

All such positive, *kataphatic* language, however, is an exception from a 'correct' way to speak of the One, as Plotinus admits in *Enn.* VI.8.13, since it is only for the sake of 'persuasion'. Plotinus thus restricts all terms, which normally imply plurality, with 'as if' (ὡς) phrases. This use ultimately reinforces Plotinus' pattern of speaking where all predication given for the One only applies to our side when we give an account 'about the One' (περὶ αὐτοῦ) rather than directly accounting for it, as we saw above in *Enn.* V.3.14. And even when using positive language, like ἐνέργεια, Plotinus is very careful with the constructions in a way that supports the One's unity, including denying terms like οὐσία in relation to ἐνέργεια, where the combination implies plurality, as with Intellect.

Given this, Plotinus' refined distinction between 'strict'/negative predication and 'persuasive'/positive predication only reinforces the tension implied in the One's causality: on the one hand it has none of the attributes that characterize Intellect, yet exactly since it causes Intellect it must anticipate what comes about in Intellect. We have just seen this in *Enn.* VI.8, which explains Intellect's self-determination as ultimately embodied in the One, and in V.4, with Intellect's intelligible nature anticipated in the One. Yet Plotinus also emphasizes that the One's unity implies its separation from Intellect and all things to the point that it is absolutely ineffable in itself.<sup>55</sup>

It is then somewhat paradoxical that Plotinus affirms the very attributes of νοῦς, like ἐνέργεια and the One as νοητόν, that he argues against, since they would appear to imply plurality and cannot pertain to what is without plurality. Indeed, later Neoplatonists criticize Plotinus over these points: Proclus for instance accuses Plotinus (albeit indirectly) of attributing plurality to the One when the latter characterizes the One as causing or constituting itself, as seen in VI.8.<sup>56</sup> For Proclus any ascription of self-constitution, even if hidden or in qualified terms, still necessitates plurality—an issue, as we will see, that is one essential motivation behind Proclus' framework.

Whether Plotinus' metaphysics of the One collapses into a higher version of Intellect, as one could be led to think above (and as Proclus and Damascius would charge), is not immediately clear. For instance, in spite of *Enn.* V.4.2 and VI.8.7–21, we have also seen Plotinus argue that the One does not contain what it produces in an absolute sense. This would suggest

55 On this topic, see Hoffmann (1997), esp. 340–370.

56 Proclus, *In Parm.* 1149,24–1150,2. I plan to discuss this issue in more detail in a forthcoming article.

that the One does *not* imply Intellect or Intellect's attributes, which would mean reading *Enn.* v.4.2 and vi.8.7–21 as purely metaphorical and not giving any indication about the One. Yet Plotinus' theory that each principle has an internal and external activity<sup>57</sup>—with the external resulting in a distinct, separate effect—suggests a continuity between the two entities and implies that the One is similar or synonymous in kind with Intellect, albeit without Intellect's characteristic plurality. Given these two tracks, one can see that Plotinus attempts to maintain a balance for the One between being both a paradigmatic cause of Intellect—suggesting continuity—and a transcendent principle over Intellect—suggesting discontinuity. Although Plotinus attempts to mediate between these two apparently opposed positions, we are yet left with a remaining tension in how one and the same entity can be equally transcendent, as a principle, and immanent, as a paradigm and cause.

At this point we can now see how Plotinus frames the conversation Neoplatonists will have about the One, both in the basic language and the tension they face in construing the first cause. Plotinus' basic framework for the One ends up being inherited and elaborated in his two subsequent successors, Porphyry and Iamblichus, while it becomes substantially critiqued and restructured in Syrianus, and later in Proclus and Damascius. While Plotinus is the ultimate influence and point of departure in the background for both Proclus' and Damascius' approaches to the One, Porphyry and Iamblichus are the most proximate figures to whom Proclus and Damascius will be responding. How the former end up understanding and modifying Plotinus' One is something we should investigate in the next two sections.

## 1.2 Porphyry

Porphyry's understanding of the One largely follows Plotinus' two-sided definition, between a 'negative' definition of the One's unity and a 'positive' definition of the One as a paradigm of Intellect. However where Plotinus' positive attributions are only given in a *metaphorical* way,<sup>58</sup> Porphyry allows for *literal* predication in a way that still affirms the One's unity. In particular, Porphyry balances predications applied to the One and Intellect in terms of a form of

57 *Enn.* v.1.3, 7–17. Cf. discussion in Emilsson (2017) 48 ff., O'Meara (1993) 63–66. See also p. 95 n.84.

58 Here I use 'metaphor' to indicate the transferral of terms from the realm of Being to the One, which implies an *improper* application, compared to analogy (cf. p. 262 n.118).

genus/species predication, so that terms applied to the One, from Intellect, only indicate an 'indefinite' kind of existence (like a genus), and thus a lack of plurality. Whereas terms applied to Intellect indicate a 'definite' kind of existence (like a species), and thus imply plurality. For instance, 'being' can be applied to both the One and Intellect, but for the One the term indicates an 'indefinite' meaning, where in Intellect it indicates a 'definite' meaning, in terms of being opposed to unity. This implies a stronger notion of identity, or synonymy, between the One and Intellect than what is found in Plotinus, although the causal model is essentially the same. In this Porphyry follows the logic of Plotinus' suggestion that the One pre-contains the attributes of Intellect according its mode of being (although Plotinus may well disagree with Porphyry's 'literal' mode of predication).<sup>59</sup>

The evidence for Porphyry's view can be found in a cursory manner in the *Sentences*, *Philosophical History*, and in testimonials, as from Damascius, although they only give us a sketch. A more substantive presentation can be found in the *Anonymous Parmenides Commentary*, although it is disputed whether the work is either from Porphyry,<sup>60</sup> a follower of Porphyry,<sup>61</sup> or a pre-Plotinian figure.<sup>62</sup> Of course the last position would not help us inasmuch as it renders moot any comparison with Porphyry's extant writings. However both the textual parallels and the positions indicated in the *Commentary* correlate closely with the writings and testimony of Porphyry, as we will see, which suggests, following those like Riccardo Chiaradonna, that the *Commentary* can be considered alongside Porphyry's views.<sup>63</sup>

We may first note Damascius' testimony of Porphyry, where he claims that Porphyry holds the One to be the 'Father' of the 'intelligible triad':<sup>64</sup> in other

59 Plotinus, for instance, disagrees that items in the same hierarchy can be construed as species under the same genus, e.g. in *Enn.* 1.4.3, 16–24, where he says that the term, 'living', means something different for plants, irrational animals, etc.

60 Hadot (1968a), more recently Dillon (1992), Strange (2007) (esp. 32–33), and to a certain degree Chiaradonna (2015a).

61 Chiaradonna (2014a) and Chiaradonna (2012)—although Chiaradonna makes cautious judgments in these articles, leaning more toward the first position—that the author of the *Anonymous* is Porphyry.

62 Bechtel (1999).

63 I do not take an explicit stance on the identity of the *Commentary's* author, but I tentatively follow Chiaradonna (2015a) (10–11) in holding that the work is at least Porphyrian in nature, *pace* Bechtel (1999).

64 *DP* 11, 1, 11–13. Westerink-Combès (n. 5, p. 216) note that Ruelle postulates this explicit formulation as coming from Porphyry's non-extant *On First Principles*, attested in the *Souda*; although in passages like Porphyry's *Phil. History* Fr. 18 (15, 8–12 Nauck), the One's transcendence over all things is emphasized, implicitly at odds with Damascius' testimony.

words, that the One is implicitly equated with Being as the first principle of the triad, with Intellect as the third extreme of the triad. In Proclus' *Parmenides Commentary* we also find the same position referenced, although not explicitly attributed to Porphyry, in the characterization of the One as the 'summit' (ἀκρότητα) (as well as 'Father') of the triad.<sup>65</sup> Damascius' and Proclus' term, 'Father', is a reference both from the Chaldaean Oracles' term for the first entity of the triad, 'Father' (πάτηρ), 'Power' (δύναμις), and 'Intellect' (νοῦς), and the first term of the standard late Neoplatonic triad, Being, Life, and Intellect.<sup>66</sup> Although the technical notion of the 'intelligible triad' is a development from Porphyry and Iamblichus onward,<sup>67</sup> Plotinus already has an early version with his characterization of the One as an 'intelligible' on which Intellect depends and from which it proceeds, as we saw in *Enn.* v.4.2. The middle term of the triad, 'Life', is analogous to the intermediate stage of 'intelligible matter' between Plotinus' One and Intellect, where it forms the first, indefinite stage of Intellect proceeding from the One before it turns back towards itself by thinking itself. One might also relate the principle 'Life' to the One considered as a δύναμις in *Enn.* v.3.15, where the One is immanently related to all things in act, compared to other passages where the One is not immanent with, but transcends, 'all things'. Later Neoplatonists characterize the middle term of Life in similar terms, where differentiation and the Forms start to become manifest.<sup>68</sup> Although these are only conceptual stages in Plotinus and Porphyry, from Iamblichus onward the triad of the intelligible, the indefinite 'intelligible matter', and Intellect form three separate principles.<sup>69</sup>

Given this background alongside the testimonies, it is not immediately clear from our texts that Porphyry would characterize the One in the same particular way that we see in Damascius' and Proclus' testimony, namely as the first term of the triad. One could read their testimony as suggesting

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We can already see this in parts of the *Anon. Commentary*, e.g. Fr. iv. In the *Anon. Commentary*, Porphyry (if we take it to be him) does not seem to maintain this claim directly—he almost seems to define the One as pre-existing the triad implicit within Intellect. However a connection can still be made, as will be shown below.

65 Proclus, *In Parm.* 1070,13–16.

66 On the background to the Neoplatonic triad of these principles, see D'Hoine (2017); for the relation with the Chaldaean Oracles, see Majercik (2001) and Majercik (1992).

67 The roots go back to the Chaldaean Oracles as well. See Majercik (1989), and recent work in Boys-Stones (2017) 519–531.

68 See e.g. Iamblichus, *In Phil.* Fr. 4; cf. Iamblichus (1973) 36–37.

69 For an analysis of the difference between Porphyry and Iamblichus on the intelligible triad, see Hadot (1968b) 98–102.



that Porphyry ‘collapses’ the One into Intellect,<sup>70</sup> especially if the ‘triad’ is simply the internal stages of Plotinian Intellect as Porphyry sometimes suggests. Against this view are passages, like *Sentence* 43, where Porphyry affirms the transcendence of the One over Intellect since the latter implies plurality, while the first principle must be without plurality.<sup>71</sup> However as we will see, Porphyry’s position lies somewhere in between these two: the One transcends Intellect and is not plural, but it also anticipates and precontains the attributes of Intellect in an indefinite, unified way. Damascius’ characterization of Porphyry’s One as the ‘Father’ of the triad fits with this description in that the One is not *reducible* to Intellect. Instead the One must be coordinated with Intellect through possessing the same attributes in an indefinite, unified way.

In the *Sentences*, Porphyry does not address the One directly (other than in *Sent.* 43), but he does implicitly reference it by referring to either the ‘beyond’ (ἐπέκεινα) or the principle above Intellect.<sup>72</sup> The first place we see reference to the One is in *Sent.* 10, where Porphyry fleshes out the Anaxagorean phrase that ‘all things are in all things’ for the different levels of beings:

All things are in all, but by the being of each in its own, proper way: in Intellect, in an intellective way; in Soul in a dialectical way (λογικῶς); in plants (φυτοῖς) in a generative way; in bodies in the manner of images; and in that which is beyond in an inherently non-intelligible way<sup>73</sup> and above being.

Porphyry, *Sent.* 10

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Dillon (1992) 352, referencing A.C. Lloyd in Armstrong (1967) 287–293, where he interprets Porphyry as ‘telescoping the hypostases’, so that Intellect is an ‘appearance’ of the One. Lloyd thus emphasizes a strong identity in kind between Intellect and the One. Here I agree with Dillon (1992), taking Porphyry to be treating the One in a two-fold way—still distinct from Intellect, but anticipating Intellect.

<sup>71</sup> Porphyry, *Sent.* 43, 1–5: ‘Intellect is not the principle of all things: for Intellect is many, while prior to the many there must be the One. That Intellect is many is apparent, since it is always thinking intelligibles, which are not one but many, and which are not different from it. If, then, it is the same as them, and they are many, Intellect too would be many’. (ὁ νοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀρχὴ πάντων· πολλὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ νοῦς, πρὸ δὲ τῶν πολλῶν ἀνάγκη εἶναι τὸ ἓν. ὅτι δὲ πολλὰ ὁ νοῦς δῆλον· νοεῖ γὰρ αἰεὶ τὰ νοήματα οὐχ ἓν ὄντα, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλα ὄντα παρ’ ἐκείνων. εἰ οὖν ὁ αὐτός ἐστιν αὐτοῖς, ἐκεῖνα δὲ πολλὰ, πολλὰ ἂν εἴη καὶ ὁ νοῦς.)

<sup>72</sup> Dillon (2010) 33–34.

<sup>73</sup> Here I agree with Dillon in Porphyry (2005) 797, n. 16, that the Liddel-Scott dictionary improperly translates this as ‘without discursive thought, i.e. by intuition’. However Dillon’s translation as ‘non-intellectually’ can be somewhat misleading, inasmuch as the root is νοητόν, i.e. an object of intellection—in this case a lack of intelligibility in the One, rather than intellection within the One.



πάντα μὲν ἐν πᾶσιν, ἀλλὰ οἰκείως τῇ ἐκάστου οὐσίᾳ· ἐν νῶ μὲν γὰρ νοερώς, ἐν ψυχῇ δὲ λογικῶς, ἐν δὲ τοῖς φυτοῖς σπερματικῶς, ἐν δὲ σώμασιν εἰδωλικῶς, ἐν δὲ τῶ ἐπέκεινα ἀνεγνωήτως τε καὶ ὑπερουσίως.

What first stands out is Porphyry's straightforward affirmation of all things being in the principle which is 'beyond' (ἐπέκεινα)—implicitly the One—alongside their being in the other principles of Intellect, Soul, and natural substances. It is also noticeable that Porphyry does not directly refer to the One but rather indirectly as 'beyond', perhaps affirming the principle's transcendence in a way that makes it impossible to call it 'one'.<sup>74</sup> Porphyry's ascription of 'all things' in all principles and entities suggests that he wants to affirm a continuity at all levels, while the manner in which each principle contains all things, like the 'beyond' as ὑπερουσίως and ἀνεγνωήτως,<sup>75</sup> marks off and makes distinct each principle in relation to its prior or posterior.

Similarly in *Sent.* 12, which is an application of the principles set in *Sent.* 10, Porphyry speaks of the 'beyond' having life in itself like the other kinds of beings.<sup>76</sup> In the passage Porphyry notes that only the 'beyond' has a distinct kind of 'life', rather than Intellect or Soul in relation to living bodies, which suggests that 'life' as it exists in the One does not properly apply to the entities after it. This both fits the 'inconceivable' mode in which the One contains everything from *Sent.* 10, while it suggests that the One's form of life is paradigmatic for

74 Cf. Plotinus' denial that the One is even 'one' and is instead ineffable in itself, e.g. *Enn.* v.3.13.

75 Porphyry's reference to the 'Beyond' as ἀνεγνωήτως may be inspired by passages like *Enn.* vi.8.11, 28–33, where Plotinus denies the One is intelligible (νοητόν).

76 Porphyry, *Sent.* 12: 'The homonymous is not only in bodies, but also pertains to the things [said] in many ways as 'living' (ζωή): for 'living' is one thing in the case of a plant (φυτοῦ); another in the case of an ensouled being; another in the case of an intellectual entity; another in the case of Nature; another in the case of Soul; another in the case of Intellect; and another in the case of what is beyond. For that too, after all, has life, even if none of the things which come after it possesses a life which is comparable to it'. (οὐ μόνον ἐν τοῖς σώμασι τὸ ὁμώνυμον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τῶν πολλαχῶς· ἄλλη γὰρ ζωὴ φυτοῦ, ἄλλη ἐμψύχου, ἄλλη νοεροῦ, ἄλλη φύσεως, ἄλλη ψυχῆς, ἄλλη νοῦ, ἄλλη τοῦ ἐπέκεινα· ζῇ γὰρ καὶ κεῖνο, εἰ καὶ μηδὲν τῶν μετ' αὐτὸ παραπλησίαν αὐτῷ ζωὴν κέκτηται.) See further Dillon (2010) 30. This appears to tie in with Porphyry's theory of predication, which gives a more favorable reading to Aristotle's ten categories compared to Plotinus. Porphyry's reference to 'the "homonymous" [which] is not only in bodies' could also be an implicit response to Plotinus, who holds that sensible properties/categories are homonymous with respect to intelligible properties/categories. For this general background see Chiaradonna (2014b), esp. 218–219 (n. 9), and 225–226. See also Porphyry (2005) 405–412.

the lower principles even if 'life' in the One is incommensurable with 'life' in the other principles.<sup>77</sup>

Porphyry's attribution of 'all things' in the One can also be taken together with a passage in the *Philosophical History* where he speaks of Intellect proceeding from the One in a 'pre-eternal way' (προαιώνιος).<sup>78</sup> Porphyry attempts to explain the One's causality of Intellect by referring to the One as 'pre-eternal', compared to Intellect which is eternal in its own nature, which indicates both the One's priority to Intellect and implies that it pre-contains the character of Intellect's 'eternity' in itself. Steven Strange thinks this is Porphyry's gloss and interpretation of Plotinus' *Enn.* v.1.6, which also addresses the same issue, although Plotinus' text is ambiguous about whether the One or Intellect is responsible for Intellect's generating itself.<sup>79</sup> Porphyry, by contrast, makes it clear in the *Philosophical History* passage that Intellect defines itself, as 'self-generated' (αὐτογέννητος) and 'father of itself' (αὐτοπάτωρ),<sup>80</sup> while the One is implicitly the source of Intellect's procession, possibly comparable to Plotinus' intelligible matter from the One. In a fragment from Porphyry's *On First Principles*, Intellect is also said to contain a 'pre-eternal' element which is also connected to the One.<sup>81</sup> Taken together with

77 Again one can see the parallel for both of these points in Plotinus, *Enn.* v.4.2, 16–21.

78 Porphyry, Fr. 223, II, 7–20: '[Intellect] has proceeded pre-eternally, starting from God as its cause, being self-generated and father of itself (αὐτοπάτωρ). For it is not the case that the procession has come to be when the former (ἐκείνου) [i.e. the Good] moves toward the generation of the latter (τούτου) [i.e. Intellect], but rather the latter has come forth self-generated from God. And [Intellect] has not come forth from a certain origin in time, since time did not yet exist, nor yet when time has come to be is time something related to it. For Intellect is always timeless and solely eternal. Just as the first god is always one alone even if all things come from it, in virtue of the fact that it is not counted in with them nor is their value (ἄξιαν) able to be compared with its existence (ὑπάρξει), so too Intellect has come to be solely eternal and timelessly, and is itself time for the things in time' (trans. Strange, modified). (προήλθε δὲ προαιώνιος ἀπ' αἰτίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὡρμημένος, αὐτογέννητος ὦν καὶ αὐτοπάτωρ· οὐ γὰρ ἐκείνου κινουμένου πρὸς γένεσιν τὴν τούτου ἢ πρόδος γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ τούτου παρελθόντος αὐτογόνως ἐκ θεοῦ, παρελθόντος δὲ οὐκ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τινὸς χρονικῆς· οὕτω γὰρ χρόνος ἦν. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ χρόνου γενομένου πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐστὶ τι ὁ χρόνος· ἀχρονος γὰρ αἶε καὶ μόνος αἰώνιος ὁ νοῦς. ὥσπερ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ὁ πρῶτος καὶ μόνος αἶε, κἂν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γένηται τὰ πάντα, τῷ μὴ τούτοις συναριθμείσθαι μηδὲ τὴν ἄξιαν συγκατατάττεσθαι δύνασθαι τῇ ἐκείνου ὑπάρξει, οὕτω καὶ ὁ νοῦς αἰώνιος μόνος καὶ ἀχρόνως ὑποστάς, καὶ τὰ ἐν χρόνῳ αὐτὸς χρόνος ἐστίν.) Cf. Strange (2007) 29–30.

79 Strange (2007) 29–30.

80 See Strange (2007) 30–31.

81 Porphyry, Fr. 223. Cf. Strange (2007) 32, who also notes: 'This would seem to be linked to the notorious difficulty about Porphyry's having posited the One as Father of the so-called First Intelligible Triad Being/Existence–Life–Intelligence'.

the *Philosophical History*, this would imply that Intellect contains an element of the One in itself, while it is also distinct by being eternal and in constituting itself.

If we compare these few passages with Plotinus, there is much we can see that is familiar from the *Enneads*. However where Plotinus both denies<sup>82</sup> and affirms<sup>83</sup> the One containing ‘all things’ in different passages, Porphyry attempts a consistent reading that would say the One *does* contain ‘all things’, but the mode of its containment means transcendence over the effects. Thus the difference from Plotinus seems to be one of emphasis in these passages.

### 1.2.1 *The Anonymous Parmenides Commentary*

If we turn to the *Anonymous Parmenides Commentary* (whether or not authored by someone from Porphyry’s circle or Porphyry himself), we find a more substantial difference with the One’s relation to Intellect characterized as two terms under the same genus—more strongly suggesting a form of identity than what we see in Plotinus or even the previous extant passages from Porphyry. In Fragments XI–XII,<sup>84</sup> the author of the *Anonymous Commentary* explains how the same ‘One’, which is separate and does not participate in Being (as in the *Parmenides*’ first hypothesis) can become the second ‘One’ which participates Being (as in the *Parmenides*’ second hypothesis):

[P<sub>1</sub>] Thus [the second ‘One’] both is [the first, ‘untouched’ (ἀκραιφνές) One] and is not [the first One] at the same time,<sup>85</sup> because that which is after something and derived from it is, in a certain way, the former, from which and after which it is, and also something else, which is not just the former from which it is, but is also perceived in the opposed properties. To begin with, the former is only ‘one’, but the latter is ‘one-all’ (ἐν πάντα); and the former is ‘one’ without substance (ἀνούσιον), but the latter is ‘one’ which is in substancehood (ἐνούσιον). Plato maintained that ‘to be in substancehood’ and ‘to be substantialized’ [means] ‘participating in substance’, but he was speaking of ‘participating in substance’, not

82 E.g. *Enn.* VI.9.2, 44–47, from earlier.

83 E.g. *Enn.* V.4.2, 17–18.

84 Cf. Hadot (1968a) 102 ff.

85 Cf. the previous lines 31–33, discussed below: πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἐν μεταβάλλοι ἐν, εἰ μὴ τὸ μὲν ἦν ἀκραιφνές (ἐξ)ν, τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἀκραιφνές.

because he hypothesized Being and then claimed that Being participated substance, but rather because he hypothesized the One, and [then] the One which is substantialized.

[P<sub>2</sub>] But perhaps because the second is derived from the first, the second is said to be 'one' through this, by participation in the first, since the whole of that One-Being has come to be from participation in the One. And since it has not come to be first, and then participated in the One, but has come to be from the One having let itself down, it was not said to participate in the One, but the One [was said] to participate in being (τοῦ ὄντος), not because the first was Being (ὄν), but because otherness (ἐτερότης) from the One has led this to being 'one', that whole. For out of its becoming secondary in some way, the One has taken on being as a 'one' (τὸ εἶναι ἓν).<sup>86</sup>

*Anonymous*, Fr.'s XI, 33–XII, 22<sup>87</sup>

διὸ ὁμοῦ ἐκεῖνο καὶ οὐκ ἐκεῖνο, ὅτι τὸ μετὰ τι καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκεῖνό τε τρόπον τινὰ ἐστίν, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ μεθ' ὃ, ἐστίν καὶ ἄλλο τι, ὃ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐστίν ἐκεῖνο ἀφ' οὗ αὐτὸ ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀντικειμένοις συμβεβηκόσι θεωρούμενον. αὐτίκα ἐκεῖνο ἐν μόνον, τοῦτο δὲ ἐν πάντα· καὶ ἐκεῖνο μὲν ἐν ἀνούσιον, τοῦτο δὲ ἐν ἐνούσιον· τὸ δ' ἐνούσιον εἶναι καὶ οὐσιώσθαι μετέχειν οὐσίας εἴρηκε Πλάτων. οὐ τὸ ὄν ὑποθεῖς καὶ τὸ ὄν γε μετέχειν οὐσίας εἰπών, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν ὑποθεῖς, οὐσιωμένον δὲ ἐν, μετέχειν οὐσίας ἔφη.

μήποτε δὲ (ὅτι) ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου τὸ δεύτερον, διὰ τοῦτο μεθέξει τοῦ πρώτου τὸ δεύτερον λέγεται ἐν εἶναι, τοῦ ὅλου (τού) τοῦ ἐν εἶναι ἐκ μετοχῆς γεγονότος τοῦ ἐνός· καὶ ἐπεὶ μὴ γέγονεν πρῶτον, εἴτα μετέσχε τοῦ ἐνός, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνός γεγονὸς ὑφειμένον, οὐκ ἐρρήθη μετασχὼν ἐνός, ἀλλὰ ἐν μετασχὼν τοῦ ὄντος, οὐχ ὅτι τὸ πρῶτον ἦν ὄν, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνός ἐτερότης περιήγαγεν αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ ἐν εἶναι τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο· ἐξ αὐτοῦ γὰρ πως τοῦ δευτέρως γεγονέναι ἐν προσείληφε τὸ εἶναι ἓν.

86 Compare the commentator's use of προσείληφε, the perfect for προσλαμβάνειν, with Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* 1.12, 78a14–16: 'A science increases not through the middle terms but by additional assumption—e.g. A of B, this of C, this again of D, and so on ad infinitum' (trans. Barnes). (αὔξεται δ' οὐ διὰ τῶν μέσων, ἀλλὰ τῷ προσλαμβάνειν, οἷον τὸ Α τοῦ Β, τοῦτο δὲ τοῦ Γ, πάλιν τοῦτο τοῦ Δ, καὶ τοῦτ' εἰς ἄπειρον.) This would agree with Chiaradonna (2012)'s analysis of the *Anonymous* having a strong Aristotelian logical background.

87 Here I follow Linguisti (*Anonymous* (1995)) in his corrections to the text from Hadot (1968b).

Here the commentator contrasts the 'One' of the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis with the 'One' of the second hypothesis, implicitly the 'One-Being' or Being.<sup>88</sup> The predominant question here is how the two hypotheses' 'Ones' are related to each other: in particular how the second 'One' comes to be from the first 'One', and in turn how Being, or substance (οὐσία), comes to be. The first paragraph [P<sub>1</sub>] initially suggests the idea that substance, or whatever possesses substance (τὸ ἐνούσιον), comes to be from Being (τὸ ὄν) beforehand—which one might think with the notion of causal synonymy, where οὐσία, as a determinate being, comes to be from τὸ ὄν. Ultimately the commentator rejects this interpretation by returning to Plato's terminology of unity from the *Parmenides*' two hypotheses and maintaining that οὐσία/τὸ ἐνούσιον must be seen as grounded in the 'One' considered as being. This background grounds the commentator's position of two 'Ones' from the hypotheses: a 'One' prior to substance and being, and a 'One' which is in being and substance.<sup>89</sup>

Yet given this, one must ask how the second 'One' comes to be with its distinct, 'opposed properties' (ἀντικειμένους συμβεβηκόσι) of 'one' and 'being', while the first 'One' lacks these distinct attributes. As we find in the second paragraph [P<sub>2</sub>], the commentator ultimately traces the distinction to 'otherness' (ἐτερότης) as a middle term between 'one' and 'being' *within* the second principle, consequent on its coming forth from the first One.<sup>90</sup> The second 'One's' participation in 'being' thus has to be understood distinctly from its participation in the first 'One': where the second One participates 'vertically' in the first One for its unity, the second One participates 'horizontally' in being (τὸ ὄν) as a distinct part, or aspect, within itself through 'otherness'.

The overall significance of this reading is that the commentator is not describing two 'aspects' of the same entity, but rather how the addition of

88 The text does not mention Intellect explicitly, but the *Anonymous* must also be referring to Intellect, if he is implying the *Parmenides*' second hypothesis.

89 Another interpretation would follow a more nominalist reading of the commentator's claim here: that substance (οὐσία) is not grounded in Being conceived of as οὐσία, but rather in the 'One' under the aspect of οὐσία. Although this reading is not completely wrong, I take it that the *Anonymous* commentator posits an ontological distinction between the 'untouched One' and the second 'One'—yet how the first entity relates to the other ultimately implies distinguishing in thought *as if* one and the same concept, unity or 'One', is at issue. As we will see, the later genus/species distinction becomes an important aspect for this. (Special thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this alternative interpretation.)

90 One may also detect a loose parallel with the *Sophist*'s 'difference' (θάτερον) as distinguishing 'rest' and 'motion' among the five μέγιστα γένη (254e2–255b1), while 'same' in relation to 'being'. While not made explicit, the commentator may be considering the One-Being as implying the μέγιστα γένη, as in Plotinus' Intellect.

predicates to the One changes its nature to imply Being, and thus a distinct entity from the first 'One'. So far this fits with the distinction between Plotinus' One and Intellect, insofar as Plotinus' Intellect reverts on itself—which implies both otherness and sameness together—which constitutes Intellect's differentiation from the One. One sees this at the end of our passage, when the commentator says that the One 'has taken on' (προσείληφε) a distinct identity as 'One-Being' when placed in a secondary rank—i.e. when difference is introduced. This is connected with Fr. XI, above, when the One's participation in being (implicitly in the *Parmenides*' second hypothesis) implies a 'mutual alteration' (συνηλλοίωται) in meaning.<sup>91</sup> The commentator uses as an example the definition of 'human being' related to its genus, 'animal', and the species-making difference, 'rational': combined together, the meanings of 'animal' and 'rational' are mutually changed, while by implication 'animal' taken by itself is not restricted or limited by the introduction of 'rational'.<sup>92</sup> The same holds for the One by analogy, where when combined with 'being' the meaning of 'one' becomes mutually altered with being,<sup>93</sup> while taken by itself it is 'unmixed' or 'pure' (ἀχραιφνές).<sup>94</sup> The commentator then seems to treat the One in two ways: either as a genus before the distinction, or as a species (or 'quasi-species') when brought together with 'being', which is unique for a strictly Aristotelian form of predication.<sup>95</sup>

Exactly how the One functions as 'genus' will give us an indication of the One's nature for the *Anonymous* commentator once we compare it below with Iamblichus' critique of Porphyry on genus/species relations. So far the commentator's distinction is reconcilable with the negative theology of passages like Fragment X, where the One, or the highest god, is described as 'above all' (τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεόν), without qualities, and without form.<sup>96</sup> One might think, however, that the remainder of Fragment XII breaks this pattern when the commentator ascribes 'being' and 'acting' to the One—similar to Plotinus ascribing activity (ἐνέργεια) to the One in *Enn.* VI.8.16. However this ultimately

91 Cf. *Anonymous*, Fr. XI, 5–10.

92 Compare with Plotinus' use of the same example in *Enn.* VI.9.2, 18–24.

93 See the extensive and well-developed discussion in Chiaradonna (2015b), in turn a development on Chiaradonna (2012) and Chiaradonna (2015a).

94 Also worth mentioning is the commentator's juxtaposition of this relationship with accidental predication, in Fr. XI, 17–19: καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν παράθεσις ἐνὸς καὶ ὄντος, ἢ ὑποκείμενον μὲν τὸ ἓν, ὡς συμβεβηκὸς δὲ τὸ εἶναι. So then the 'mutual alteration' between properties seems to be an emphasis on the *unified* nature of 'one' and 'being', whereas if one or both were an accident, neither would be essentially together; cf. Chiaradonna (2012) 96–97.

95 Cf. Chiaradonna (2012) 97.

96 *Anonymous*, Fr. X, 11–32.

fits the commentator's framework, where the terms of 'being' and 'acting', as they are defined, are synonymous with the One's unity and transcendence:

Observe [whether] Plato does not seem [to speak] even with subtlety, since the One, which is beyond substance and Being,<sup>97</sup> is, on the one hand, neither Being, nor substance, nor activity. But, on the other hand, it rather acts, and is pure acting itself, so that it is also being-itself (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι) which is before Being (τοῦ ὄντος). It is in participating in [being-itself] that the other 'One' receives from it being (τὸ εἶναι) which is bent outward.<sup>98</sup> So that 'Being' (τὸ εἶναι) is two-fold: (1) that which pre-exists Being (τοῦ ὄντος), and (2) that which is brought in from the One, which is<sup>99</sup> beyond Being (ὄντος), and which is [itself] being (τοῦ εἶναι), as absolute and as it were the Form of Being. By participating in this, a given other 'One' has come to be, by which being (εἶναι) which is brought forward from it is joined together. Just as if one were to think of 'being white' [...].<sup>100</sup>

*Anonymous*, Fr. XII, 22–35

ὅρα δὲ μὴ καὶ αἰνισσομένῳ ἔοικεν ὁ Πλάτων, ὅτι τὸ ἓν τὸ ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας καὶ ὄντος ὃν μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲ οὐσία οὐδὲ ἐνέργεια. ἐνεργεῖ δὲ μάλλον καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν καθαρὸν, ὥστε καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι τὸ πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος· οὐ μετασχὼν τὸ ἓν ἄλλο ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔχει ἐκκλινόμενον τὸ εἶναι, ὅπερ ἐστὶ μετέχειν ὄντος. ὥστε διττὸν τὸ εἶναι, τὸ μὲν προϋπάρχει τοῦ ὄντος, τὸ δὲ [δ] ἐπάγεται ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος τοῦ ἐπέκεινα ἐνός τοῦ εἶναι ὄντος τὸ ἀπόλυτον καὶ ὥσπερ ἰδέα τοῦ ὄντος, οὐ μετασχὼν ἄλλο τι ἓν γέγονεν, ᾧ σύζυγον τὸ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιφερόμενον εἶναι· ὡς εἰ νοήσεως λευκὸν εἶν(αι) ...

97 Here I use uppercase 'Being' for τὸ ὄν—which is convertible with the second 'One', or 'One-Being'—and lowercase 'being' for εἶναι, which I parenthesize each time. The *Anon.* commentator's juxtaposition between τὸ ὄν and εἶναι is important here. As Chiaradonna (2012) 90 points out, οὐσία and ὄν are interchangeable when applied to the intelligible world, for both the *Anon.* commentator and Plotinus: see e.g. Plotinus, *Enn.* v.5.5, 14–16; vi.2.8, 12–13; etc.

98 Hadot translates this as 'un être dérivé', while Bechtle translates as 'an extracted being'. However the context from Plato's works tend towards 'distortion', 'decline', or 'shun'. See e.g. *Cratylus* 404d6 and *Laws* V, 746c. For here I follow a literal translation, which ultimately makes sense of the context: the commentator goes on to show cases where οὐσία or ἐνέργεια always implies a relation between two distinct objects or terms; ἐνεργεῖν or εἶναι, on the other hand, can indicate the entity or principle without such a distinction.

99 See also Hadot (1968a) 107, n. 3, on this complex construction, where I follow him by taking the second ὄντος in a copulative sense.

100 Here the extant text unfortunately breaks off.



One important thing to note in this passage is the division that the commentator makes between the finite participle, τὸ ὄν, and the infinitive, εἶναι: the One transcends τὸ ὄν, but it is identified with εἶναι, which is also linked with 'pure acting itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν). Why this is significant is brought out in the second distinction (2) when the commentator says that εἶναι is brought forth from the One and 'joined together in Being'. This would fit with the earlier passage, where the One's unity becomes contextualized and interchanged with being through the introduction of 'otherness'. Unfortunately the text drops off after the commentator begins to mention 'being white' (λευκὸν εἶναι), but this last mention may fit with the earlier example of 'animal' being joined with 'rational' for the definition of 'human being': εἶναι is only limited when it is brought into a specific relation, as in a participial or substantive context like τὸ ὄν, or even with λευκὸν εἶναι instead of εἶναι.<sup>101</sup> In any case, the commentator appears to take εἶναι in the same sense as the 'pure' One from earlier, so that the One can be said 'to be', in the infinitive sense, without delimiting or adding an extra character to it that would then make it τὸ ὄν, in the same sense as 'being' added to the second 'One' makes it 'impure'. We then have the same form of argument between [P2], above, and the previous passage, but this time with 'being' and 'acting', rather than 'one'.

The point of the *Anonymous* commentator's analysis is then to clarify how 'being' comes about in the second One of [P2]: if unity comes from the One, then so should Being; but if so, then the One should virtually pre-contain Being without the characteristic 'impurity' of duality in the One-Being. Out of the complex consideration above, the commentator then proposes that we can speak of the One as εἶναι (and ἐνεργεῖν), without forsaking its unity, while the introduction of 'difference' (ἐτερότης) then brings about the duality implied between the terms 'one' and 'being' (τὸ ὄν). This maps on analogously to a genus/species relation, where the One can be considered similarly to a genus, in itself, before the species-making difference is applied. When applied, the genus then admits the account of its species-making difference, as with ἐτερότης which introduces being in the One-Being,<sup>102</sup> while beforehand it does

101 This is of course speculation, so it is only one tentative possibility for this example. See Chiaradonna (2012) 92, who postulates that the commentator uses here the Stoic account of incorporeal predicates to explicate the distinction between the infinitive, 'being white' (λευκὸν εἶναι), and the quality, 'white' (λευκόν), loosely in line with the distinction between the first and second 'One' (respectively).

102 Cf. Chiaradonna (2015a) 5, where he references Porphyry's two-sided description of genus/species relations (testified in Simplicius, *In Cat.* 79,24–30): between the genus considered as 'unallocated'/ἀκατάτακτον (e.g. the genus 'animal', defined without reference to its species) and as 'allocated'/κατατεταγμένον (e.g. the genus 'animal' insofar as it is a genus of a certain species, like 'human being'). In Chiaradonna's words (in (2015b) 5), this



not.<sup>103</sup> Ultimately, the same term, 'One', is applied between both the first and the second One, and in this sense the *Anonymous* commentator appears to take the 'One' as a genus equally applied to the two principles.

Comparing the *Anonymous* commentator with the extant passages from Porphyry, there is a close parallel in the former's use of genus/species language to passages such as that from the *Philosophical History* (Fr. 223) and the *On First Principles* (Fr. 232), where Intellect implicitly contains an aspect of the One in itself. Similarly Porphyry's predication of 'all things' in the One is compatible with the commentator's indefinite/definite distinction between the One and Being, as between ἐνέργεια and ἐνεργεῖν, and so on.<sup>104</sup> If we put these passages together, then Damascius' claim about Porphyry seems correct: the One *is* the first term of the intelligible triad, to the degree that the indefinite predications of εἶναι and ἐνεργεῖν become the starting points for their becoming defined and distinct once 'otherness' (as analogous to the middle term of the triad) is introduced.<sup>105</sup> On the other hand, we should keep in mind passages like the

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distinction would 'allow for the possibility that the genus allocated to the species admits the account of the differentia. Insofar as it is the genus of human being, animal admits the name and the account of rational. Similarly, insofar as the one is not pure, but is allocated to the one-being, we can say that the property of being is predicated of it and it admits the account of being/*ousia*'.

103 Cf. *Anonymous*, Fr. XIV, 4–16.

104 Cf. Chiaradonna (2015a) 5 with the distinction between κατατεταγμένον/ἀκάτακτον. The distinction is also reflected in Iamblichus' critique of Porphyry (cf. Chiaradonna (2015a) 9–11): in the *De Mysteiriis*, Iamblichus critiques Porphyry for using specific differentia to classify divine entities like the gods, where they do not otherwise have the same substance or being (Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 1.4, 1–8). To express the difference between the gods in terms of such properties (ιδιώματα) means that they ultimately share the same kind of being, which is insufficient to express the substantial difference between each of the gods and, for example, intelligible or sensible entities. Iamblichus thus specifies in *De Myst.* 1.4 that the divine entities cannot be classified as 'having an opposed division of the same rank, nor the synthesis of an indefinite element that is common, and a particular element that defines' (1.4, 6–8) (μήτε ἐξισάζουσιν ἐχόντων ἀντιδιαίρεσιν, μήτε σύνθεσιν τὴν ἐξ ἀορίστου τοῦ κοινού καὶ ὀρίζοντος τοῦ ἰδίου προσλαμβάνοντων). As Chiaradonna points out, this latter 'synthesis' of an indefinite element and a 'particular element that defines' ultimately parallels the commentator's distinction between the infinitive of 'being', εἶναι, for the first 'One', and the substantive or participial use of τὸ ὄν, for the second 'One', in XI, 29–35.

105 Thus I fail to see the claim in Dillon (2007) 58 that the *Parmenides*' second hypothesis, for Porphyry, is 'the Plotinian One in its positive, emanative aspect', since the three distinct terms of 'one', otherness, and 'being' constitute Intellect—so this is not unlike Intellect for Plotinus. Furthermore, Dillon seems to think that Porphyry's One of the first hypothesis is different from Being: 'Pure Being, thought of independently of its being joined with Oneness, must be regarded as something indefinite [...] after joining with the One, it becomes

*Anonymous Commentary's* Fragment XIV, where the One is explicitly contrasted with what is 'not one' on the level of subsistence (ὑπαρξιν), life (ζωήν), and intellect (νόησιν)<sup>106</sup>—parallel to the three terms of the intelligible triad for later Neoplatonists. This would initially appear to negate Damascius' interpretation of the One as the first term of the triad, as certain interpreters also hold.<sup>107</sup> However the commentator may yet be describing the three terms as they exist in actuality in the One-Being, or Intellect, while the One may also pre-contain these three terms in its undefined mode of being. In this respect the One could still be construed as the first term of the intelligible triad, albeit as undefined.

### 1.2.2 *Assessing Porphyry and the Anonymous Commentary in Light of Plotinus*

On comparing Porphyry's extant texts with Plotinus, one significant difference is that the former attempts to predicate terms of the One from the level of Intellect (or 'all things') that concurs with the One's mode of unity. For Plotinus however, terms like ἐνέργεια and self-causation are predicated of the One within the context of applied qualifications, in phrases like 'as if' (οἶον), to imply only metaphorical predication: in other words such terms do not pick out a given property, defined or undefined, in the One, but they only show how the One is paradigmatic of Intellect. In the explicitly Porphyrian texts, what is new

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Intellect'. However the commentator equates the One with indefinite being, as we have seen, so the One *is* identical to 'Being' (i.e. εἶναι, not τὸ ὄν) in Dillon's definition.

106 *Anonymous*, Fr. XIV, 10–16: 'Thus it is one and simple according to its first Form' (ιδέαν), that is according to the aspect of the 'this itself', taken in relation to itself—power or whatever we are to call it, merely for the sake of indication, ineffable and inapprehensible as it is—but not one and not simple on the level of existence and life and thought (νόησιν): (ἐν μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν καὶ ἀπλοῦν κατὰ τὴν πρώτην καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ το[α]ύτου ιδέαν, δύναμις ἣ δτι καὶ χρὴ ὀνομάζειν ἐνδείξεως (χ)άριν ἄρρητον οὖσαν καὶ ἀνεκνόητον, οὐχ ἔν δὲ οὐδὲ ἀπλοῦν κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν καὶ ζωὴν (καὶ) τὴν νόησιν.) Here we find one of the few places in the *Commentary* that explicitly references the later, traditional Neoplatonic (and implicitly that of the Chaldaean Oracles) triad of 'Father', 'power', 'intellect', a harbinger for what becomes a common distinction made for late Neoplatonists, especially Proclus and Damascius (cf. previous n. 66). For the middle term, 'life', analogous to the Chaldaean term, 'power', the commentator may be drawing on 'otherness' (ἐτερότης) from the earlier Fr. XIV, 18–19, to support the general thesis of a middle term between the two extremes of ὑπαρξιν and νόησις, just as between 'one' and being/substance.

107 E.g. Dillon (1992) 358, 363–364; and Dillon (2007), esp. 53: 'The fact that Proclus characterizes the subject of the second hypothesis for Porphyry as τὸ νοητὸν πλάτος (*In Parm.* 1054, 1–2) is a little disconcerting, but need only be a careless, or tendentious, oversimplification: Porphyry does indeed see the second hypothesis as concerned with the intelligible level of reality, but as presided over, I would suggest, by the intelligible triad, of which God, in his "relational" aspect, is the Father'.

is that such qualifications are removed: as we saw from *Sent.* 10, for instance, ‘all things’ are predicated of the One as at all lower levels, albeit according to the mode of each principle’s existence.

The *Anonymous* commentator further pushes this attempt at a unified theory of predication through a genus/species analogy. The commentator is able to link the two levels this way, while distinguishing between the two by making the genus (as the One) ‘indefinite’ in relation to the species, which are defined (as Being—or Plotinus’ Intellect). This goes further than what one finds in Plotinus’ framework, where Plotinus is more concerned to remove the One from any such predication to preserve its transcendence. By contrast, within the *Anonymous* commentator’s framework, the One *is* being (εἶναι) and acting (ἐνεργεῖν)—almost certainly problematic for Plotinus—even though the terms for the commentator are indefinite and ultimately concur with the One’s unity. This would also fit with Porphyry’s characterizations above, both with the attribution of ‘all things’ in the One and even the suggestion that Intellect as ‘pre-eternal’ is either identified with, or located within, the One.

Yet if we return to the problem of tensions in Plotinus’ model, Porphyry’s attempt at clarification shifts the tension: while he defines the positive terms applicable to the One in a way that goes hand-in-hand with the negative attributes applied to it (i.e. as transcendent, unattainable, and so on), his particular application of the genus/species relation to the One and Intellect instead implies a problem of transcendence: namely how is the One separate from Intellect and Being if, in the end, it is still characterized by terms which result in their coming to be? In other words, if ἐνεργεῖν and εἶναι are identical to the One, do they still imply their substantive/participial counterparts which in turn imply plurality? This at least appears to be the concern taken up by Iamblichus, as we will next see.

### 1.3 Iamblichus

Iamblichus represents a significant departure from Porphyry and Plotinus inasmuch as he posits intermediate principles between the One and Intellect. This ultimately leads us one step in the direction of Proclus’ framework. Yet while this move has been taken to imply a rejection of Plotinus’ (and implicitly Porphyry’s) view about the One pre-containing the intelligible causes,<sup>108</sup> Iamblichus, so we will see, rather holds much the same position. The intermediate

<sup>108</sup> D’Ancona Costa (1996) 379–380.

principles in Iamblichus then explain a more gradual process of plurality produced from the One, although the One pre-contains the character of the first term of the intelligible triad, and by proxy the intelligible triad within itself. Instead it is Proclus who recognizes that the delegation of causality to these intermediaries frees the One from pre-containing the plurality that comes after it—thus a full rejection of the Plotinian ‘One’.

Like Porphyry, Iamblichus’ view is not fully developed in any one given extant work, however once again in Damascius’ testimony we find one of the clearest expositions.<sup>109</sup> Damascius says that Iamblichus posits two first principles (πρῶται ἀρχαί) above the intelligible triad: (a) an ineffable, transcendent principle, and (b) and an uncoordinated (ἀσύντακτον) principle above the triad, implicitly the One.<sup>110</sup> In terms of the intelligible triad, Iamblichus divides the three ‘stages’, implicitly found in Porphyry,<sup>111</sup> into separate, causal principles: (c1) Being (as solely intelligible), (c2) Life (as at once intelligible and intellective), and (c3) Intellect-itself.<sup>112</sup> To give a better sense of this transformation of Porphyry’s (and by proxy, Plotinus’) structure of principles, the following diagram should help to illustrate:<sup>113</sup>

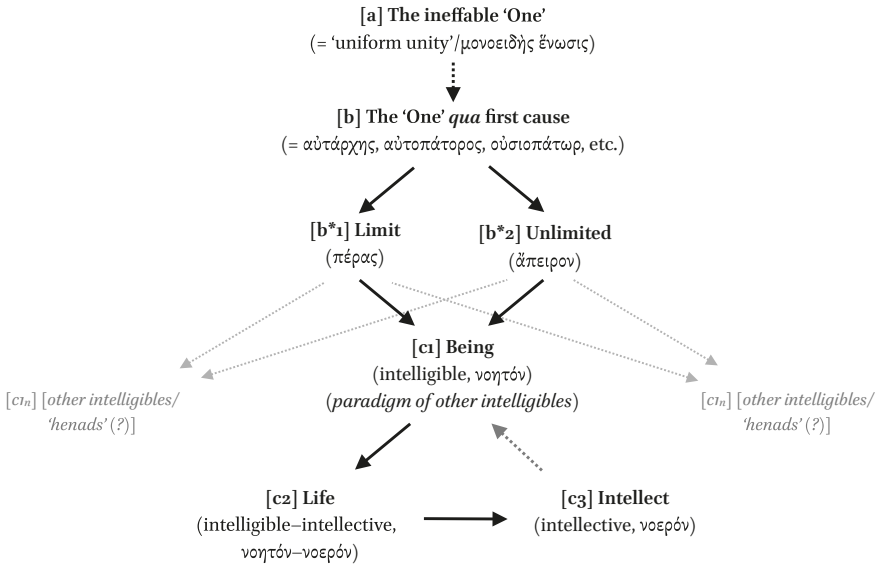
109 Sheppard (1982) 9, n. 14, and Gersh (1978) 137, n. 62, cast doubt on Damascius’ (and, by proxy, Proclus’) testimony of the Limit and Unlimited in Iamblichus. However the excerpts of Iamblichus’ *On Pythagoreanism* from Psellos in O’Meara (1989) do suggest that Iamblichus does hold to these two principles. Further elaborated below.

110 Damascius, *DP* II 1,5–8.

111 Via the *Anonymous Commentary*, Fr. XIV, 31–36: ‘And the activity of all beings which act comes to a stand according to subsistence (c1); the activity [of such beings] turns towards itself according to intellection (c3); and the activity [of such beings] is a motion away from [mere] subsistence according to life (c2)’. (καὶ πασῶν οὐσῶν ἐνεργειῶν καὶ ὡς κατὰ μὲν τὴν ὑπαρξιν ἐστῶσα ἂν εἴη ἡ ἐνέργεια, κατὰ δὲ τὴν νόησιν εἰς αὐτὴν στραφεῖσα ἐνέργεια, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ζωὴν ἐκ τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἐκνεύσασα ἐνέργεια.) Pace Edwards (1997) (esp. 198) and Edwards (1990), who denies the connection to Porphyry or the Commentator, these lines describe separate properties pertaining to each stage of ὑπαρξις, ζωή, and νόησις. The Commentator does not make these separate principles, or give them separate causal roles for the Forms (e.g.), as Iamblichus does, but seems to describe these as three aspects of the same entity (as the One-Being: his use of ἐνέργεια, for ‘all beings which act’, would certainly suggest this; see Fr. XII, 22–35). Otherwise he has the same structure in place that Iamblichus inherits.

112 E.g. Damascius, *In Phil.* 105,49–51 (= Iamblichus, *In Phil.* Fr. 4). See Dillon’s discussion of this development in Iamblichus (1973) 36–37.

113 Concerning (b\*1) and (b\*2), this extra distinction is discussed below. Concerning the question-mark with ‘henads’, see n. 133. It goes without saying, any work on later Neoplatonism is greatly helped by (if not necessitates) the tradition of diagrams, like those provided by Gersh (1978) and Chlup (2012), among others.



One possible reason for Iamblichus' division of the triad into separate principles, or 'hypostases', is that each has a unique causal function: for instance, Iamblichus describes time (χρόνος) deriving distinct functions from the three principles.<sup>114</sup> By contrast in Porphyry's framework, as suggested from the *Anonymous Commentary*, the three stages do not appear to be separable apart from the One-Being's activity.

A second factor behind Iamblichus' separation of principles may also be his position on genus/species relations in contrast to Porphyry's position. For the latter, as we saw, entities that are characterized by unique properties, or a species-making difference, can be defined under a common, 'indefinite' genus. Yet for Iamblichus in the *De Mysteriorum*, this distinction fails to affirm the transcendence of principles like the gods and other divine entities. Iamblichus' solution is instead to define each god or entity as existing according to its own kind or genus—in this respect, remaining transcendent—while they can still be treated within a hierarchical relation by analogy since they derive from a common source.<sup>115</sup> This also follows a general position that Iamblichus

114 Iamblichus, *In Tim.* Fr. 65.

115 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 1.4, 14.4–14.16: 'To sum up, is it the case that you postulate just one class of gods, and one of daemons, and likewise of heroes, and of incorporeal souls taken on their own, when you ask for the distinction of their characteristic properties, or do you recognize a plurality of them? For if you take each of them to be a unity, then the entire structure of scientific theology is thrown into confusion; but if, as one may satisfy oneself in this case, they form distinct genera, and there is no single essential definition common to all of them, but the prior among them are separate from the inferior, it is no

holds on genera and species in general, where the genus must transcend and pre-exist its subsequent division into species:<sup>116</sup> substance, for instance, must exist as a separate principle before the emergence of intelligible and sensible substance.<sup>117</sup> In the case of the latter two, the predication of 'substance' is

longer possible to discover any common terms for them. And if we admit that this may be so, this very fact eliminates the possibility of there being any characteristic attributes of them as a whole; so by following this route one is not going to discover what one is seeking. But if one were to apply an analogical account of identity to the entities in question, as for example to the many genera of gods, and again to those among the daemons and heroes, and lastly in the case of souls, then one might succeed in defining their unique characters (ιδιώματα)' (trans. Clarke/Dillon/Hershbell, modified). (τὸ δ' ὅλον, πότερον ἐν γένος ἡγούμενος θεῶν, καὶ δαιμόνων ἐν, καὶ ἡρώων ὡσαύτως, καὶ ψυχῶν τῶν καθ' αὐτάς ἀσωμάτων, ἀπαιτεῖς αὐτῶν τὴν κατὰ τὰ ιδιώματα διάκρισιν, ἢ πολλὰ ἕκαστα τιθέμενος; εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἕκαστον ὑπολαμβάνεις, συγχεῖται πᾶσα τῆς ἐπιστημονικῆς θεολογίας ἡ διάταξις· εἰ δ' ὥσπερ ἔστιν ἐμπλησθῆναι, τοῖς γένεσιν ἀφώρισται, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς εἰς οὐσιώδους κοινὸς λόγος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πρότερον αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῶν καταδεστέρων ἐξήρηται, οὔτε οἶόν τε κοινὰ αὐτῶν ἐξευρεῖν πέρατα· ἐάν τε καὶ ἡ δύνατον, αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο τὰ ιδιώματα αὐτῶν ἀναιρεῖ· ταύτῃ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἂν τις εὔροι τὸ ἐπιζητούμενον· τὴν δ' ἀνὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ταυτότητα ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναφερόντων ἀναλογιζόμενος, οἶον ἐπὶ τῶν πολλῶν ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς γενῶν, καὶ αὖθις ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς δαίμοσι καὶ ἡρώσι, καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον ἐπὶ τῶν ψυχῶν, δύναιτο ἂν τις αὐτῶν ἀφορίζεσθαι τὴν ιδιότητα.)

116 Chiaradonna (2015a) 10–11. See also Iamblichus *apud* Proclus, *In Tim.* 1, 78,25–26 (cf. Van Riel (1997) 42–43).

117 Cf. Simplicius, *In Cat.* 77,15–26, which implicitly references Iamblichus' position: 'And moreover, even if the primary substance is the genus of incorporeal and corporeal substance, they do not rightly contend, I think, that, if the principle is incorporeal, body is necessarily incorporeal too because it partakes of the primary substance; and that if the principle is body, the incorporeal is necessarily body for the same reason. For according to this argument, given that animal is the genus of the rational and irrational and of the mortal and immortal, the irrational will be rational or the rational irrational and the mortal immortal or vice versa. On the contrary, the genus transcends the opposite differentiae because it comprises both and because in virtue of its transcendent superiority it contributes to each in the way proper to each. For if corporeal and incorporeal are dividing (differentiae) of substance, and if rational and irrational are dividing (differentiae) of animal, but not constitutive (differentiae) (since nothing is constituted by opposites), it is clear that the genus exists prior to the contrast' (trans. De Haas). (καίτοι καὶ γένος ἦν ἡ πρώτη οὐσία τῆς τε ἀσωμάτου καὶ τῆς σωματικῆς, οὐ καλῶς οἶμαι ἀναγκάζουσιν, εἰ μὲν ἀσώματος, καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀσώματον εἶναι, διότι μετέχει τῆς πρώτης οὐσίας· εἰ δὲ σῶμα, καὶ τὸ ἀσώματον σῶμα γίνεσθαι διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν. τούτω γὰρ τῷ λόγῳ, ἐπειδὴ τὸ ζῶον γένος ἐστὶν τοῦ λογικοῦ καὶ ἀλόγου καὶ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου, ἔσται καὶ τὸ ἄλογον λογικὸν ἢ τὸ λογικὸν ἄλογον καὶ τὸ θνητὸν ἀθανάτον ἢ ἀνάπαλιν. ἀλλ' ἐξήρηται τὸ γένος τῶν ἀντικειμένων διαφορῶν ὡς ἄμφω περιέχον καὶ ὡς ἑκάτέρω οικείως ἐπιβάλλον κατὰ τὴν ἐξηρημένην ὑπεροχήν. εἰ γὰρ διαιρετικά τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ ἀσώματον καὶ τοῦ ζώου τὸ λογικὸν καὶ τὸ ἄλογον, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ συστατικά (οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων συνίσταται), δηλὸν ὅτι προϋπάρχει τῆς ἀντιθέσεως τὸ γένος.) See also *In Cat.* 74,21–75,8, and 83,21–29, which references Iamblichus' critique and response to Alexander of Aphrodisias dividing sensible and incorporeal substance as if they were the same kind.

homonomous, strictly speaking, yet 'substance' can still be predicated of the two *by analogy*, rather than synonymously, in relation to 'substance'-itself.<sup>118</sup> When brought to bear on Iamblichus' division of the intelligible triad into separate principles, this would imply that 'being' is not predicated synonymously of 'life' and 'intellect' (and in turn, the latter two are not predicated of their peers in the same way): rather, analogous predication applies between each, since each principle is successively derived from its prior (i.e. Intellect from Life, and Life from Being). In turn, we can make sense of Damascius' claim that Iamblichus' One is 'uncoordinated' with the triad, where the One's unity cannot be predicated of Being, Life, and Intellect in the same way. Instead, the One's unity can be predicated of the three as the cause of each principle. This stands in contrast to the *Anonymous Commentary's* approach, where one *does* apply synonymous predication between the One and One-Being, albeit using indefinite and definite terms for each respectively.

Our immediate interest is how Iamblichus understands the One's causal relation to Being and Intellect, and subsequently whether, or in what way, it pre-contains these two as a cause. Already we have seen that Iamblichus adds two distinct, separate principles between the One ([*b*], above) and Intellect (*c*<sub>3</sub>), with Being (*c*<sub>1</sub>) and Life (*c*<sub>2</sub>). While Intellect implies plurality fully manifested, Being represents the existence of the Forms according to their unity.<sup>119</sup> Yet because Being is the cause of Life and Intellect, it already contains an incipient form of plurality by anticipating the Forms' plurality. Thus, we find an additional distinction between the One (*b*) and Being (*c*<sub>1</sub>): Iamblichus posits two principles, the Limit (*b*\*<sub>1</sub>) and Unlimited (*b*\*<sub>2</sub>), which facilitate the production of Being from the One.<sup>120</sup> With the Limit and Unlimited, Iamblichus utilizes the *Philebus'* framework of the four 'kinds' of principles, with Being as the resulting 'Mixed' (τὸ μικτὸν) and the One as the 'Cause'.<sup>121</sup> Thus by making the One the 'cause' prior to the Limit and Unlimited, Iamblichus sets the One as transcendent over the causal process of Being, which is produced directly from the Limit and Unlimited. Although in Plotinus (and likely Porphyry) the One is also transcendent in terms of its primary activity (*ad intra*), its secondary activity (*ad extra*) acts as the constitutive element in Intellect. Yet since the secondary activity is *of* the One, in that respect the One directly produces Intellect. For Iamblichus, by contrast, the Limit takes over the One's role as

<sup>118</sup> Simplicius, *In Cat.* 83,21–29.

<sup>119</sup> See e.g. Iamblichus, *In Phil.* Fr. 4.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. the previous figure in p. 57. See also Damascius, *DP* 11, 1,5–8.

<sup>121</sup> Plato, *Phil.* 16c5–e2, 23c–d. For an overview of Iamblichus' use of the *Philebus* in light of his metaphysical principles, see Van Riel (1997) 37–45.



cause of unity from Plotinus, while the Unlimited takes the place of the One's secondary activity as the 'intelligible matter' of Intellect.

Once again we see Iamblichus' principle of hypostasizing what were just modal stages between the One and Intellect. As will be discussed in the chapters below, this overall structure recurs in Proclus and Damascius, while Iamblichus' distinction between an ineffable principle (*a*) and the One (*a*) becomes the focal point of dispute between Proclus and Damascius. Thus to understand how this background motivates our two main figures' frameworks, we should carefully review Iamblichus' approach, bearing in mind both the One's causality (*b*) and in what sense the ineffable principle (*a*) plays a role, if any.

First, what justifies Iamblichus' division of the One into an ineffable and a causal principle? If we consider the tension of the One's relation to plurality in Plotinus and Porphyry, it would initially seem that Iamblichus' separation of the different stages into principles below the One should satisfy this worry: the One is no longer a direct cause, as was Plotinus' One, suggesting that an ineffable principle over the One would be a superfluous move. However the motivation may result from Iamblichus' acceptance of two aspects that Plotinus had unified in the One: namely, that of being a paradigm of Being and Intellect, and also as transcendent over Being and Intellect—having neither any feature of, nor causal relation to, Being. We see this in passages like *De Mysteriis* VIII.3, when Iamblichus lists what are apparently the first two principles set over the gods and the intelligible world:

Before real beings and the principles of wholes is the one god, even the very first of the first god and king, remaining unmoved in the singularity of its own unity. For no intelligible object is bound with it, nor anything else. For it is established as a paradigm of the god which is father of itself (αὐτοπάτορος), producer of itself (αὐτογόνου), and father-alone, as the real Good. For it is something even greater as first, source of all things, and foundation of all the first objects of intellection, which are the Forms. From this One, the self-sufficient god showed itself forth,<sup>122</sup> since it is both father of itself and principle of itself (αὐτάρχης). For such is the first principle and god of gods, monad from the One, before substance and as principle of substance.<sup>123</sup> From it are substantiality

122 In Clark/Dillon/Herbshell's trans., as 'From this One there has autonomously shone forth the self-sufficient god ...'.

123 Compare this and the next line with Plotinus, *Enn.* v.2.1, 5–7, esp.: '... in order that being may exist, the One is not being, but the generator of being.' (καὶ ἵνα τὸ ὄν ᾗ, διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς οὐκ ὄν, γεννητὴς δὲ αὐτοῦ.)



(οὐσιότης)<sup>124</sup> and Substance, for which reason it is even called the ‘father of Substance’ (οὐσιοπάτωρ). For it is pre-existent Being-itself, principle of the intelligibles, for which reason it is even addressed as ‘ruler of the intelligible’ (νοητάρχης).<sup>125</sup>

*De Myst.* VIII.2, 261,7–262,7

πρὸ τῶν ὄντως ὄντων καὶ τῶν ὄλων ἀρχῶν ἐστὶ θεὸς εἷς, πρῶτιστος καὶ τοῦ πρῶτου θεοῦ καὶ βασιλέως, ἀκίνητος ἐν μονότητι τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἐνότητος μένων. οὕτε γὰρ νοητὸν αὐτῷ ἐπιπλέκεται οὕτε ἄλλο τι· παράδειγμα δὲ ἵδρυται τοῦ αὐτοπάτορος αὐτογόνου καὶ μονοπάτορος θεοῦ τοῦ ὄντως ἀγαθοῦ· μείζον γάρ τι καὶ πρῶτον καὶ πηγὴ τῶν πάντων καὶ πυθμὴν τῶν νοουμένων πρῶτων ἰδεῶν ὄντων. ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ἐνὸς τούτου ὁ αὐτάρχης θεὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐξέλαμψε, διὸ καὶ αὐτοπάτωρ καὶ αὐτάρχης· ἀρχὴ γὰρ οὗτος καὶ θεὸς θεῶν, μονὰς ἐκ τοῦ ἐνός, προσούσιος καὶ ἀρχὴ τῆς οὐσίας. ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἡ οὐσιότης καὶ ἡ οὐσία, διὸ καὶ οὐσιοπάτωρ καλεῖται· αὐτὸς γὰρ τὸ προόντως ὄν ἐστὶ, τῶν νοητῶν ἀρχή, διὸ καὶ νοητάρχης προσαγορεύεται.

At first glance it is unclear whether the so-called ‘One’, which is not intelligible (νοητόν), and its subordinate principle, the ‘god of gods’, correlates with the ineffable principle (*a*) and the One as ἀσύντακτον (*b*), above, or the One as ἀσύντακτον (*b*) and the Limit (*b*\**γ*)—which forms the first internal triad of Being. Other passages appear to suggest the first relation ((*a*) and (*b*)), insofar as Iamblichus applies a two-sided predication to each level: for instance, the One is described as beyond the causes of all beings, from the outside, but ‘hiddenly’ and on the inside it is described as *containing* the causes of all beings. One can also see that the majority of the attributes described, such as ‘father of itself’, ‘principle of itself’, etc., apply to the ‘god of gods’, while the ‘One’ before the ‘god of gods’ is described as a paradigm of this principle, as ‘remaining ... in the singularity of its own unity’. It is striking that many of the attributes for the ‘god of gods’ parallel those ascribed to the One in Plotinus’ *Enn.* VI.8, as terms like ‘father of itself’ and ‘principle of itself’ (or ‘cause of itself’, for

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* x.3, 164,34, where the term is used also in referencing the attributes of ‘God’ or the first principle; in that case, Alcinous notably also ascribes self-thinking and intellection to the principle, while here Iamblichus (following Plotinus—excepting *Enn.* v.4.2 and VI.8.13 ff.) denies this and places the first god beyond being intelligible. Dillon/Clark/Hershbell also suggest a reference to Hermetic and Gnostic texts.

<sup>125</sup> The term seems to only occur in Iamblichus—and in itself it repeats the previous attribution of ἀρχὴ τῶν νοητῶν to the ‘god of gods’.

Plotinus).<sup>126</sup> There, as here, the One is given these terms to indicate its paradigmatic role as the cause of Intellect, especially since it explains the feature of self-determination that is perfectly expressed in Intellect, while the One yet embodies this feature by its unity. To this degree Iamblichus acknowledges the requirement to ascribe a paradigmatic role to this second principle.

In reconciling the *De Mysteriorum* with Damascius' representation of Iamblichus, one can take the 'One' and the 'god of gods' to correspond to (a) and (b), respectively, insofar as the passage's 'truly existent Good'—which is equated to the One, for Plotinus—refers to the subordinate 'god of gods' under the passage's 'One'. Further, one may find an allusion to Plato's *Epistle II* (312e) with the mention of 'the first god and king', which Plotinus and Neoplatonists in general link to the One. Furthermore, Proclus implicitly refers to Iamblichus in his *Parmenides Commentary*, when he critiques an unnamed figure who holds that the One 'produces itself'—even using the same word, αὐτογόνοϛ, as above.<sup>127</sup> Assuming Proclus has Iamblichus in mind with this critique, this would lend support to seeing the second principle as the causal 'One' (b).<sup>128</sup> On the other hand, there are certain reasons to disagree with this interpretation: the *De Mysteriorum* passage only explicitly refers to the first principle, rather than the second, as the 'One', while the second principle is associated with the Good—quite unlike Proclus' and Plotinus' identification of the Good with the One.<sup>129</sup> Further it is odd that the 'One' referred to is the 'truly ineffable' (παντελὴς ἄρρητον) when it is named as 'One' and is a paradigm of the second principle, while

126 See e.g. *Enn.* VI.8.18, 37–40; cf. earlier, p. 38–40. On a related issue of self-determination in the One and divine entities, between Plotinus in *Enn.* VI.8.7 and Iamblichus in *De Myst.* III.17–20, see Narbonne (2008).

127 Proclus, *In Parm.* 1151,12.

128 However cf. Narbonne (2008) 197, where he seems to think that Iamblichus' reference to the 'Unbegotten' (τὸ ἀγέννητον) (*De Myst.* III.19, 146,15; VII.1.6, 269,11) is an implicit rejection of Plotinus' principle of self-generation. This is somewhat paradoxical in light of our passage in *De Myst.* VIII.2, which Narbonne does not mention, if indeed the One is referenced here as 'producer of itself' (αὐτογόνου); even if it is the lower principle of the Limit (b\*), or Being, it is still strange exactly what is ἀγέννητον, or perhaps in what regard a divine entity, or the One, would be ἀγέννητον.

129 This can also be correlated with Michael Psellos' excerpt of Iamblichus' *On Pythagoreanism* VII in O'Meara (1989) 226 (*On Eth. Theol. Arith.* 59–63), where Iamblichus distinguishes the Good as producing and multiplying itself, while the One unifies and contains all within itself. Whether or not Iamblichus actually distinguished between the One and the Good as separate principles (as opposed to indicating different modes of being, for instance) is not clear, but it certainly influences, e.g., Proclus' emphasis that 'one' and 'good' are the same in both account and reference in *ET Prop.* 13; but see also Damascius, *In Phd.* 1, 516,3–6, where he accepts a difference between the two terms as concepts (*pace* Proclus), but says that they are still correlated with the same entity.

Iamblichus does not directly or indirectly refer to it as 'ineffable'. Alternatively this would suggest the second interpretation, that the passage's two principles refer to (*b*) and (*b*\*<sub>1</sub>), with the 'god of gods' then corresponding to the Limit (*b*\*<sub>1</sub>).<sup>130</sup> One might also think this regarding the principle referred to as 'father' or 'father of itself', where 'father' refers to the first of the three terms in the intelligible triad.

Ultimately, however, other passages appear to suggest the first reading: that the 'god of gods', above, refers to the Iamblichus' One (*b*). We find evidence for this in a surviving passage from Iamblichus' *On Pythagoreanism* VII, excerpted by Michael Psellos, which roughly follows Damascius' testimony of Iamblichus' framework above. While the *Pythagoreanism* passage does not mention an ineffable principle, it preserves a similar description of the One to *De Mysteriis*' 'god of gods', as implicitly both transcending the triad of the Limit, Unlimited, and Being, yet pre-containing the triad:

The first then, the 'One' properly speaking, which we would call for ourselves 'God',<sup>131</sup> is henad and triad (for the triad unrolls the beginning, middle, and end around the One); and the intelligible and brightest monad ascends to the highest cause; and the supercelestial of the ⟨monad(?)⟩ leader of ⟨cosmic⟩ order; and the earthly, indivisible in the divided, full in the lacking. There is a divine dyad, unlimited power, never failing procession of life, receiving the measure of the first one. For the dyad is intelligible, intellectual, mathematical, and in matter. So also the triad: one is intelligible, one intellectual, one supercelestial, one celestial, and one which has entirely penetrated the universe.

*On Ethical and Theological Arithmetic* 70–80; trans. O'Meara, modified<sup>132</sup>

ἔστιν οὖν τὸ πρῶτον καὶ κυρίως ἓν, ὃ δὴ φαίμεν ἂν ἡμεῖς ὁ θεός, ἐνὰς καὶ τριάς (ἢ γὰρ τοὶ τριάς ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσα καὶ τέλη περὶ τὸ ἓν ἀνελίσσει): καὶ τὸ νοητὸν καὶ φανότατον τῆς μονάδος εἰς ἄκραν αἰτίαν ὑπερβαίνει, καὶ τὸ ὑπερουράνιον αὐτῆς ἀρχηγὸν διακοσμήσεως, καὶ τὸ περίγειον ἀδιαίρετον ἐν τοῖς διηρημένοις, πλήρες ἐν τοῖς ⟨ἐν⟩δεέσιν. ἔστι δὲ καὶ θεία δυὰς δύναμις ἄπειρος, ζωῆς προόδος ἀνέκλειπτος, ὑποδοχὴ τοῦ πρώτου ἐνὸς μέτρου. ἢ γὰρ δυὰς ἐστὶ καὶ νοητὴ καὶ νοερὰ καὶ μαθηματικὴ καὶ ἔνυλος. οὕτω δὲ καὶ τριάς· ἢ μὲν τίς ἐστὶ νοητὴ, ἢ δὲ

130 Or according to Dillon (Iamblichus (2003) 307, n. 401), another interpretation is that the first and second principles in *De Myst.* VIII.2 refer to the One (*b*) and One-Being (*cr*).

131 O'Meara (1989) 82–83 takes the 'we ... for ourselves' as Psellos' interposition, giving a Christian interpretation, which I follow here.

132 Cf. O'Meara (1989) 226–227.

νοερά, ἡ δὲ ὑπὲρ τὸν οὐρανόν, ἡ δὲ ἐν οὐρανῷ, ἡ δὲ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ πάντα διαπε-  
φοίτηκε.

While the passage's context concerns 'divine numbers', Iamblichus refers the numbers to 'divine entities' which appear to be both intelligible and related to the 'gods' of the *De Mysteriis*.<sup>133</sup> In this case Iamblichus explains how the divine numbers are generated ultimately by a principle which is a 'uniform unity' (μονοειδὴς ἕνωσις) that pre-exists all numbers, including the first 'divine unified number of all things'.<sup>134</sup> Noticeably three principles are involved: after the One (corresponding to  $[b]$  from above) comes the 'divine monad' (corresponding to  $[b^*1]$ ), the 'divine dyad' (corresponding to  $[b^*2]$ ), and the 'triad' (most likely corresponding to  $[c]$ ). Iamblichus thus follows a familiar interpretation from previous Neopythagoreans and Old Academy figures like Speusippus who consider the monad and dyad as the first principles that directly produce the number series corresponding to the Forms—or in Iamblichus' case, corresponding first to divine entities. But this time Iamblichus again seems to follow the *Philebus* framework by positing the One as prior to the monad and dyad. Notably Iamblichus calls the monad and dyad both intelligible and divine, whereas the One itself is only divine and not intelligible. In Proclus we will later see a sharp distinction made between 'divine' and 'intelligible' as two separate categories, where Proclus equates divinity with unity only and separates the intelligible by making it composed of unity and plurality. But for now, one consequence of Iamblichus' monad and dyad being 'divine' and intelligible together is that they imply coordination with the fourth term of the triad, whereas the One as pre-existing the 'divine unified number' implies that it is uncoordinated—which fits Damascius' definition as ἀσύντακτον.

133 Iamblichus seems to treat the 'divine numbers' analogously to Proclus' henads: they come after the One and are equated with the gods. However an important difference is that Iamblichus seems to treat the henads as both 'one' and intelligible, where Syrianus and Proclus treat the henads as 'one' only. See Dillon (1993) and O'Meara (1989) 138–140; 205. See also Mesyats (2012) for a similar interpretation, but with a different emphasis: for Mesyats the 'henads' that Dillon claims in Iamblichus are rather aspects, as it were 'parts', preeminent within the One (171–173). This follows from Mesyats's claim (168) that Iamblichus 'did not think that every transcendent principle is to remain in pure identity with itself without being connected with anything else. His view was, on the contrary, that every "absolute", "independent", "transcendent" and "unparticipated" cause is to contain and anticipate in itself all its products, because otherwise it would not be a cause'. Overall one can see this from our passages—and it foreshadows Damascius' general view of principles, as we see below in Ch. 3.

134 Iamblichus, *On Eth. Theol. Arith.* 68–70.

For our purposes, we should note Iamblichus' mention of the One as 'henad and triad',<sup>135</sup> which is somewhat surprising: why does the One imply the triad that comes after it? At first glance it is not clear how the One should be related if the monad and dyad directly compose the resulting triad. Yet the reasoning is that 'the triad unrolls the beginning, middle, and end around the One'. This suggests that the One is the focal point around which the order of the monad, dyad, and triad, as analogous to the three terms, is structured.<sup>136</sup> If so, the One then pre-contains the triad that is finally produced after it, even if it does not directly produce it but rather the monad and dyad instead. This account is paralleled in Proclus' *Parmenides Commentary*, 1114,1–14, which describes unnamed 'others' who hold that the One does not possess 'beginning, middle, and end' in a distinct way (διηρημένως), but it possesses the three in a 'hidden way' (κρυφίως).<sup>137</sup> Given the similarity in language to our passage above, it seems safe to say that Proclus includes Iamblichus squarely in the camp of the 'others' with his description. If we accept this link, Proclus' passage would further confirm that Iamblichus considers the One in a two-fold way: as prior to the causal process of the monad, dyad, and triad, since they are distinct, but as pre-containing the principles within itself. In the same way this would also parallel the *De Mysteriis* passage with the second principle, the 'god of gods', pre-containing and anticipating the structure that comes after it.

One additional text earlier in Proclus' *Commentary* further confirms this two-sided reading for Iamblichus. Although not found in Iamblichus' extant texts, we find another position that Proclus attributes to a group of 'other commentators', which is likely the same as the 'others' from 1114,1–14 above.<sup>138</sup>

135 Here I take 'henad' in a loose sense compared to Proclus' technical usage of it as distinguished from the One.

136 See also *De Myst.* 1.19, 59,15–60,2. Cf O'Meara (1989) 82.

137 Proclus, *In Parm.* 1114,1–5. Both Steel and Dillon (1988) 31–32 refer this position to Iamblichus, although neither cite the connection to Psellos' excerpt—which makes the connection even clearer.

138 Who these 'other commentators' are has been a point of dispute in the scholarship. Dillon (1988) and Carlos Steel in his critical edition of Proclus' *In Parm.* argue that Iamblichus is the direct target of both this passage and *In Parm.* 1114,1–14. D'Ancona (1991) 285–7 (esp. n. 40, 41), on the other hand, argues that the position goes back to Porphyry and especially Plotinus, partially agreeing with Pierre Hadot's ascription of the position to Porphyry. While I ultimately side with Steel and Dillon's assessment—that the 'other commentators' in this passage indicates Iamblichus—D'Ancona is certainly right that the language ultimately goes back to Porphyry and Plotinus. Ultimately this goes to show that Iamblichus preserves Plotinus' language for the One (e.g. in *Enn.* vi.8.18, 37–40), and in turn Porphyry's language in places like *Sent.* 10 where the One pre-contains its effects in their unique characteristics in a unified, simple way.

Other commentators have accordingly said that the cause of all things, being set up as the first beyond Life, beyond Intellect, and beyond Being itself, has in some way the causes of all these things in an unutterable and inconceivable way, in the most unitary way, and unknowable to us but knowable to itself. And the hidden causes of wholes are in it as paradigms of paradigms (παραδείγματα παραδειγμάτων), the first whole-itself before wholes, not being in need of parts:<sup>139</sup> for the whole before parts is in need of the parts in some way, and this being the very thing Plato confutes,<sup>140</sup> while the whole before wholes is in no way in need of parts.<sup>141</sup>

PROCLUS, *In Parm.* 1107,8–22

ἄλλοι τοίνυν εἰρήκασιν ὅτι πάντων αἴτιον ὃν τὸ πρῶτον ὑπὲρ ζωῆν, ὑπὲρ νοῦν, ὑπὲρ αὐτὸ τὸ ὃν ἰδρυμένον, ἔχει πως τὰς τούτων αἰτίας ἀπάντων ἀφράστως καὶ ἀνεπινοήτως καὶ τὸν ἐνικώτατον τρόπον καὶ ἡμῖν μὲν ἀγνώστως, ἑαυτῷ δὲ γνωστῶς· καὶ ἔστι τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ κρύφια τῶν ὅλων αἴτια παραδείγματα παραδειγμάτων, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοῦλον πρὸ ὅλων, οὐ δεηθὲν μερῶν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρὸ τῶν μερῶν ὅλον δεῖσθαι πως τῶν μερῶν καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι ὅπερ ἀνεῖλεν ὁ Πλάτων· τὸ δὲ ὅλον πρὸ τῶν ὅλων οὐδὲν δεῖσθαι μερῶν.

Just like Proclus' description above for 'beginning, middle, and end' with the One, we also find these 'other commentators' speaking in the same way for the One regarding its causal role toward Being, Life, and Intellect—the principles corresponding to the intelligible triad:<sup>142</sup> they are pre-contained in the One 'in the most unified way' (ἐνικώτατον τρόπον), as unutterable (ἀφράστως) and inconceivable (ἀνεπινοήτως), similar to the One pre-containing beginning, middle, and end without being differentiated (διηρημένως) as they are in themselves. And just like the One containing the triad 'hiddenly' (κρυφίως) above,

139 This is reminiscent of language in Plato's *Timaeus* (30c2–31a1) of the Living Being (τὸ ζῶον) which pre-contains the kinds of living things, implicitly the Forms, without parts in itself.

140 Cf. Plato, *Parm.* 137c4–d3.

141 Compare this to Iamblichus, *De Myst.* VIII.2, 261,1–2: 'Before truly existent beings and the principles of wholes is the one god ...' (πρὸ τῶν ὄντως ὄντων καὶ τῶν ὅλων ἀρχῶν ἐστὶ θεὸς εἷς, ...)

142 For the context of this position, see earlier Proclus, *In Parm.* 1105,25–1106,2, where Proclus describes the 'other commentators' as afraid that there is nothing for the imagination to grasp with the One as a cause, so that some nature must be ascribed to it (discussed below, p. 178, esp. n. 71). One may recognize here Proclus' implicit critique of these 'commentators'—implicitly Iamblichus and earlier Neoplatonists—where their causal model depends on something for the imagination to grasp.

we also find the same sense here with the two-fold distinction between the One containing the causes as 'knowable (γνωστῶς) to itself' and 'unknowable (ἄγνώστως) to us'. Thus the One produces Being, Life, and Intellect as distinct principles by pre-containing them in their respective characteristics according to its mode of unity. One additional dimension here, compared to the previous position, is that the One is 'the first whole-itself before wholes' (τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοῦλον πρὸ ὅλων), which secures it from dependence on the parts belonging to their respective wholes. Put this way, the One is secured from the plurality and dependence implied in the whole-before-parts inasmuch as it is placed an extra 'step' backward by producing the wholes which, in turn, produce the parts. Although Proclus ultimately finds Iamblichus' solution finally problematic,<sup>143</sup> this becomes an important backdrop to Proclus' refined position of the One as unparticipated and the henads as participated intermediaries between the One and plurality.

While we have a better sense of the One for Iamblichus, there is still the question of how the 'One' in this case relates to the 'uniform unity' from *On Ethical and Theological Arithmetic*. In other words, does Iamblichus' 'uniform unity' refer to the 'One' attested to in Proclus (as well as the passage in *Arithmetic* 70–80, above), or does it refer to a principle prior to the 'One' (i.e. (b) from earlier)? Dominic O'Meara speculates that the latter is the case, since Iamblichus seems to suggest that unity underlies divine numbers, i.e. divine entities, while the One-proper (b) is itself such a 'number'. By implication, the 'uniform unity' would be correlated to the ineffable principle attested in Damascius (a), thus transcending the 'One' which immediately underlies the intelligible triad—and in this sense produces the triad by 'hiddenly' pre-containing it.<sup>144</sup>

To summarize, if we compare these passages with Damascius' testimony earlier, we can make two conclusions: (1) what Iamblichus calls the 'One'

143 Cf. below p. 173–178.

144 Compare here Iamblichus' description of the One as hiddenly pre-containing the intelligible triad with Damascius' characterization in *DP* 11, 16,4–7, of Iamblichus' One as a 'fused nature' (συμφύσεως) that is split into the two distinct principles of the Limit and Unlimited, with the Mixed as the resulting entity. (Cf. our discussion of this passage below in p. 267–270.) Cf. also Damascius, *In Parm.* 111, 27,6 ff., who testifies that Iamblichus holds the 'Once-beyond' (ὁ ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα) to be the 'first duality' to appear after the 'One' (or 'Twice-beyond'). (Although see Dillon's comment in Iamblichus (1973) 396, who thinks that language like τὸ ἅπαξ ἐπέκεινα is more characteristic of Damascius and doubts whether Iamblichus uses this. Nevertheless, the language still likely references the same entities for Iamblichus.) Once again the 'first duality' would implicitly point to the 'One' immanently related to the triad from Iamblichus' *Arithmetic* passage and Proclus' characterization of the One of the 'other commentators' from his *In Parm.* 1107,8–22.



in most cases (with the possible exception of *De Mysteriis* VIII.2) closely resembles Plotinus' One in *Ennead* VI.8.13 ff., namely that it pre-contains attributes like self-causation and the intelligible triad found within Intellect; and (2) Iamblichus does seem to hold that there is a principle prior to this 'One', but whether he would characterize it as having the nature of unity, or whether it is simply the 'entirely ineffable' principle as Damascius phrases it, is unclear. What is clear is that (2) suggests that Iamblichus parts ways from Plotinus (and by proxy, Porphyry) in that he thinks that the One as pre-containing its effects is not sufficient as the first principle by itself, but rather must be grounded in a prior, unrelated principle.<sup>145</sup> The intimation that there is an ultimate 'unity' from both *De Mysteriis* VIII.2 and the *On Pythagoreanism* extract suggests that Iamblichus still thinks that the first principle is also 'One', but it must be distinguished from the 'One' which first causes the intelligible triad, and which is implicitly the subject of the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis.<sup>146</sup>

If we compare Iamblichus so far to Porphyry and Plotinus earlier, one thing that comes out is that the same idea of the One pre-containing its effects is preserved among all these figures, although dealt with in two different ways: in Porphyry, especially in the *Anonymous Commentary*, it is in terms of the relation between an indefinite genus to a defined species; in Iamblichus, it is in terms of splitting an ineffable, uncoordinated unity from a coordinated unity (i.e. the One) that is simultaneously separate from, yet immanent within, the intelligible triad that it produces. Although effectively agreeing with his priors about the One's nature, Iamblichus seems to recognize that this 'One' cannot remain the absolute first principle in itself, since it internally pre-contains its effects: instead a higher principle must be posited. Although the point is

<sup>145</sup> Here I find Van Riel (1997) 37–38 somewhat unsatisfactory in accounting for Iamblichus' two principles: 'Certainly, one can always maintain—as Iamblichus did—that a true categorization of the One can only be accomplished through negations, and as a consequence, that the One in itself does not “play a role” in this procession, that it is not “co-ordinate” with the intelligible triad. But still, once the question of the one and the multiple is raised, one has in fact already lowered the status of the One'. Van Riel, however, appears to rely solely on Damascius' testimony, which may involve a different line of reasoning for positing the Ineffable—namely the linguistic front. Instead, from earlier passages, like *De Myst.* VIII.2 and *On Pythagoreanism* VII (which Van Riel does not cite), the issue for Iamblichus is not one of language, but rather causal, especially if the One's unity is internally conditioned by plurality (i.e. as pre-containing the triad).

<sup>146</sup> Damascius denies that the Ineffable is the subject of the first hypothesis (e.g. *DP* I, 19,1 ff.), and insofar as Iamblichus' first 'One' is equatable to Damascius' Ineffable, it is possible that Iamblichus holds the same view as Damascius (see Saffrey and Westerink, introduction to *PT* xxxi–xxxii). Cf. Steel (1997) 28–30.



subtly made in Iamblichus, this becomes a significant point of departure for Damascius, as we will later see.

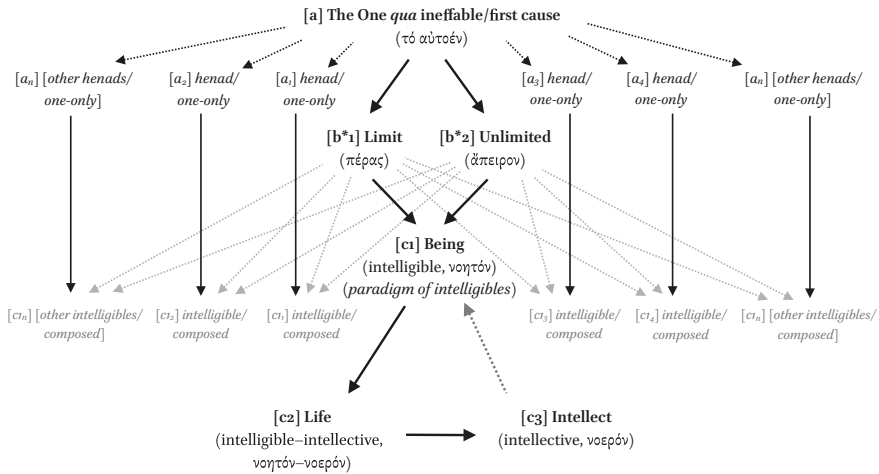
#### 1.4 Conclusion: Syrianus' Transformation as the Foundation for Proclus and Damascius

While surveying Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, a continuing tension that lingers throughout is how the One can maintain its transcendence over plurality, while its first effect is yet plurality. Although all three figures maintain that the One's subsistence is pure unity, transcending plurality, one can nevertheless recognize a tacit acknowledgement of the principle of causal synonymy at work: that the cause produces what is like itself, while the effect must then reflect the cause's nature. Put in these terms, if the One's effect is plurality, the One's nature must then be such as to anticipate its effect—in other words it must be a kind of plurality in itself—even the effect's existence is characterized by unity. One sees this in the various ways that each figure attempts to locate the characteristics of Being in the One, even where those characteristics are only manifested in plurality: namely self-constitution, activity (ἐνέργεια), the simultaneous characters of limit and unlimited, alongside the distinct stages of the intelligible triad, and so on. While the One may pre-contain these according its mode of unity, one may still wonder whether the One itself is still affected by the kind of plurality associated with these characteristics—even if, as all three Platonists do, one construes their being in the One in a way mirroring the One's unity. In other words, a lingering question remains about the degree of transcendence granted to the One by all three figures.

It is indeed this overarching concern that seems to motivate Syrianus to re-orient the One's nature and position toward plurality and Being, paving the way for Proclus' systematic framework, as we will see shortly. Coming out of Iamblichus and Porphyry, Syrianus breaks with the Plotinian framework of interpreting the One as anticipating its effects, and rather affirms the One's transcendence apart from the intelligible triad as well as the gods. Syrianus does so by affirming that the immediate product after the One is not a duality or plurality, as is the case in Iamblichus with the triad, but rather entities that are simply 'one' in their subsistence—i.e. the henads (ἐνάδες).<sup>147</sup> Because

<sup>147</sup> Compare with Iamblichus who seems to make the henads in his own system intelligible (νοητόν) as well as 'one', instead of one-only as in Syrianus and Proclus: cf. earlier n. 133. See also O'Meara (1989) 139–141, esp. n. 57 (cf. Syrianus, *In Parm.* Fr. 1 [Wear] [= Proclus, *In Parm.* 640,13–641,4]), who notes Syrianus' implicit critique of Iamblichus for making the

the One only produces ‘ones’ instead of plurality, it then only pre-contains the unity that essentially characterizes its immediate effect, while the henads, as the One’s first effect, directly produce the intelligible world: both the intelligible triad itself and all derivatives of the triad. The following figure will help to illustrate Syrianus’ transformation of Iamblichus’ structure—what effectively becomes the structure of principles for Proclus:<sup>148</sup>



One primary factor behind Syrianus’ structural shift lies in his interpretation of the first and second hypothesis in Plato’s *Parmenides*.<sup>149</sup> Unlike Iamblichus, who is said to maintain that the *Parmenides*’ first hypothesis concerns ‘God and the gods’,<sup>150</sup> Syrianus holds that the first hypothesis can only concern ‘God’ (i.e. the One) by itself, while the ‘gods’ (i.e. Syrianus’ henads) are to be relegated to the second hypothesis, concerning the causation of Being. Thus, whereas Iamblichus maintained a two-sided interpretation of the One as ‘hiddenly’ containing the positive attributes of Being—while in itself transcending Being and its attributes—Syrianus externalizes this two-sided position: the

One co-ordinated with the henads—like a unit in relation to a series of numbers—rather than absolutely transcending both the henads and their effects. This becomes a fundamental point at issue in both Syrianus and Proclus, as we will see.

148 The numbering from the previous figure in p. 57 for Iamblichus is preserved, except for [a<sub>1</sub>], [a<sub>2</sub>], etc., which indicates, of course, the henads as a new, distinct level for Syrianus and Proclus. See also Chlup (2012) 103, Fig. 11, as a correlate for this diagram (to the degree that Syrianus effectively has the same structure of principles as Proclus).

149 For an overview of Syrianus’ reading of the *Parmenides*, see Wear (2011b).

150 See Proclus, *In Parm.* 1054,31–1055,2, implicitly referencing Iamblichus. Cf. Dillon (1988) 23–24.

first hypothesis instead indicates the 'One' as it stands by itself, without any relation to Being (i.e. the One-proper), while the second hypothesis indicates the 'One' as it relates to Being, in causing its various positive characteristics (i.e. the particular 'ones', or henads).<sup>151</sup> Syrianus' own two-sided interpretation for the two hypotheses' 'One' then results in a restructuring of Iamblichus' framework: the One-itself is placed in the role of Iamblichus' transcendent principle, while what was Iamblichus' One becomes delegated to the henads for Syrianus.<sup>152</sup> While Iamblichus implicitly considers the 'One' of the *Parmenides'* first hypothesis to be responsible for the unfolding of 'beginning, middle, and end' and the intelligible triad manifested in the second hypothesis, for Syrianus the 'One' of the *second* hypothesis directly produces the triad and 'beginning, middle, and end'.<sup>153</sup> Consequently the 'One' of the first hypothesis grounds the 'One' of the second hypothesis, so that while transcendent, the 'One' of the first produces the corresponding 'ones' or henads belonging to the varying positive characteristics of Being in the second hypothesis. For Syrianus this ultimately satisfies the lingering tension in Iamblichus and the earlier Neoplatonists' approach for the One: if indeed the One has no relation to Being and its characteristic plurality, as the *Parmenides'* first hypothesis so implies for Syrianus, then the One must delegate its causality of Being to an intermediate set of principles: in other words the henads corresponding to the second hypothesis' 'One'. Although Iamblichus, as we saw, recognizes the principle of intermediate causality when he posits the intelligible triad as distinct entities, in contrast to Plotinus' Intellect, Syrianus brings Iamblichus' principle to its

151 Syrianus, *In Parm.* Fr. 3 (= Proclus, *In Parm.* 1061,25–1064,10, esp. 1062,14–1063,1). Cf. commentary in Wear (2011b) 234–241.

152 Cf. Damascius, *De Princ.* 11, 1,8–11 and 16,21–17,2, who testifies that Syrianus (and Proclus) posit one first principle which is both 'one' and simultaneously ineffable over the intelligible triad. Wear (2011b) 6 and (2011a) 76 seems to think that Damascius in *DP* 11, 17,1–17, testifies to *two* principles—the Ineffable and the One, like Iamblichus—in Syrianus' framework. But Wear does not seem to consider the immediately preceding page, as well as the earlier reference in *DP* 11, 1,8–11, that clearly indicate Proclus and Syrianus behind the view that there is only one principle that is *both* ineffable and 'one'. Gersh's suggestion in Wear (2011a), n. 66, is certainly correct with this context in mind.

153 See e.g. Syrianus, *In Parm.* Fr. 4 [Wear] (= Proclus, *In Parm.* 1114,29–1116,16), in the context of Syrianus addressing a potential conflict between Plato's *Laws* IV, 715e7–716a2, affirming the triad of 'beginning, middle, and end' to the first 'God' (equivalent to the One), and the *Parmenides'* first hypothesis (137d4–7) denying the triad of the One. (Cf. Wear (2011b) 5, and commentary on the passage in 246–50.) It could well be that Syrianus is directly responding to Iamblichus, from *On Pythagoreanism* VII (*Arithmetic* 70–80), and testified in Proclus, *In Parm.* 1114,1–5.

logical conclusion with the distinction between the One as unparticipated and the henads as the first, participated causes of Being.

As we will see below, Proclus endorses his master's framework and systematizes the insights Syrianus initially grasps in his transformed reading of the One in light of the *Parmenides*. An essential premise in this transformation is the distinction between unparticipated and participated causality first developed in Syrianus: for Proclus this becomes an essential axiom to explain causality at all levels of reality. Proclus ultimately applies this causal model to the One, in great part influenced by Syrianus' reading from the *Parmenides*' first two hypotheses. However, certain questions arise in how Proclus understands this new model inherited from Syrianus: although the One no longer directly produces plurality, how does the One produce the henads, which in turn produce plurality? In what way is the One's causality conveyed to its participated intermediaries, i.e. the henads, while it yet remains transcendent? And in what way can the One still be considered a cause of Being, if it is no longer a direct cause?

These questions we will next address in Chapters 2 and 4 when we discuss both Proclus' general framework for unparticipated and participated causes, and then the application of that framework to the One. Understanding the necessity for unparticipated and participated causes in general, and in what way the principles of transcendence and causal synonymy are preserved in this structure, will help us to see how Proclus looks at the One within his whole framework of causality. In the later Chapter 4, understanding how Proclus specifically elucidates the One's priority over all things, while facilitating the henads as conveyors of the One's causality, will help to show the specific kind of transcendence that Proclus ascribes to the One, and in turn some of the difficulties to which this leads Proclus. The tension resulting from these difficulties in Proclus' model, we will later see, is what leads to Damascius' own transformation of Proclus' framework, where Damascius ultimately swings the pendulum back towards Iamblichus with a similarly Plotinian conception of the One.

## Proclus' Causal Framework

Proclus' response to the tensions raised by his predecessors over the One depends in large part on the causal framework that he employs. As we saw toward the end of the last chapter, Proclus follows Syrianus in making the One unparticipated, which is one of the main ways for him to place the One beyond plurality. The emphasis on the One as unparticipated leads Proclus to say in places that it is not even a 'cause'.<sup>1</sup> Given statements like this, one might be misled to think that being 'unparticipated' means that such entities like the One have no causal relation with their final effect: rather it might suggest that the One is completely uncoordinated without any attachment or causal link. If the transcendence of the One is so emphasized by the term, 'unparticipated', what function does the One serve—or any cause, in general, that is considered 'unparticipated'?<sup>2</sup>

To answer this question, we should first consider Proclus' use of the term, 'unparticipated' (ἀμέθεκτον), within his broader causal framework. The term is one that first appears in Iamblichus<sup>3</sup> and becomes systematically used in Proclus' master, Syrianus, as we saw in the latter's interpretation of the *Parmenides*' first two hypotheses.<sup>4</sup> As it turns out, the concept of an 'unparticipated' entity is not unique to the One, but Proclus rather applies the term systematically to all other principles of being, including Intellect and Soul. Whereas for Plotinus both of these principles are each single principles—so that Soul,

1 See e.g. Proclus, *PT* 11.9, 58,23–59,4, esp.: 'It is only in hymns of silence that we are bound to praise the ineffability of this non-causal cause (ἀναιτίως αἴτιον) before all causes. It is only by analogy with the first terms participating in it that we transfer causality (whether final or paternal) onto the first principle, together with the notions of the "good" and the "one"'. (ἀλλὰ σιγῇ τὸ ἄρρητον αὐτοῦ καὶ πρὸ τῶν αἰτίων πάντων ἀναιτίως αἴτιον ἀνυμνεῖν. εἰ δέ, ὥσπερ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἓν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ αἴτιον, καὶ τελικὸν ἢ πατρικόν, ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων αὐτοῦ μετεχόντων ἐπ' αὐτὸ μεταφέρειν ἐπιχειροῦμεν.) Cf. Chlup (2012) 56. Throughout this chapter, all primary source citations refer to Proclus unless otherwise specified.

2 The same question recurs for Damascius, as we will see, insofar as causality is denied *absolutely* to his first principle—the Ineffable—while for Proclus' first principle—the One—causality is only *relatively* denied: i.e. as not participated. The One is still a cause via its production of participated entities, i.e. the henads.

3 Iamblichus, *In Tim.* Fr. 54, 56; cf. Iamblichus (1973) 33–34.

4 Syrianus, *In Met.* 45,16–31, which substantially follows Proclus' argument about the unparticipated placed on different levels of reality up to the One. Cf. Wear (201b) 4–6.

for instance, implies many, particular souls that are essentially related to it<sup>5</sup>—for Proclus, Intellect and Soul are differentiated between one, unparticipated principle (e.g. Soul-itself) and many separate, particular entities (e.g. particular souls, which ‘fully descend’ from Soul-itself and the eternal world).<sup>6</sup> As a result, only the latter are participated, while the first cause of those entities remains unparticipated by itself. In turn, only participated causes directly act on the participants. One may then wonder what causal function the unparticipated serves, like the One, if to be unparticipated implies detachment from the participants while participated causes carry out the ‘real’ causal function. If only participated entities are the causes of a given effect in their participants, this might suggest that the unparticipated is a superfluous term in the causal structure.

As we will see, Proclus does give the unparticipated a causal function, but in a mediated way. Properties that participants receive are directly produced by distinct, participated entities, while those entities are in turn produced by the unparticipated. In this sense Proclus admits a law of transitivity between the unparticipated and participants: as A produces B (i.e. the participated), and B produces C (i.e. the participant), so A is a cause of C through its production of B. In this way Proclus balances both causality and transcendence for the first cause of each level of being—as for the levels of Intellect and Soul—up to the One: the cause as unparticipated is not, then, affected by the participants in its causality, yet it still produces distinct entities that carry out its effect.<sup>7</sup>

5 Although scholars have disagreed on the kind of individuation between the principle, Soul, and the different types of souls pertaining to the world, like World-Soul, the souls of the planets and stars, and human/rational souls: on this, see Emilsson (2017) 149–152.

6 *ET* Prop. 211: ‘Every particular soul, when it descends into generation, descends as a whole, and there is not one aspect of it that remains above, and another that descends’ (πάσα μερικὴ ψυχὴ κατιοῦσα εἰς γένεσιν ὅλη κάτεισι, καὶ οὐ τὸ μὲν αὐτῆς ἄνω μένει, τὸ δὲ κάτεισιν.) However one should bear in mind Proclus’ claim in Prop. 191 that each soul has an ‘eternal substance’ (οὐσίαν αἰώνιον) and a ‘temporal activity’ (ἐνέργειαν κατὰ χρόνον)—the former of which suggests that there is *no* change, as generation would otherwise imply in Prop. 211. This conflict reflects a disagreement between Proclus, Iamblichus, and Damascius on how to characterize each soul’s intermediate nature between eternity and temporal change. On this see Steel (1978), esp. on Proclus, 69–73.

7 One may draw an analogy—albeit fairly loose—to Aristotle’s distinction between the unmoved mover and the world-sphere itself in *Met.* Λ.6–9: the unmoved mover exercises no direct efficient causality but rather acts as a final cause of motion for the world. In this way the unmoved mover is unaffected as the first cause of motion, while the world sphere is the first *moved* mover for all lower kinds of motions. The analogy falls apart insofar as, for Proclus, the unparticipated transmits its characteristic property to the participated, and thereby participants, while for Aristotle the unmoved mover does not transmit any property—a

In this respect, Proclus' appellation of the One as 'unparticipated' is not unique to it, but is in large part an application of his causal framework applied at all the lower levels of being. Just as the Forms are divided between an immanent and transcendent aspect for Proclus, so Proclus also understands causes like Intellect and the One in the same way. This becomes crucial for him to address the tension of his predecessors on the One's relation to the plurality that it causes.

There are two issues, then, which we should address: first in Section 2.1, why all truly productive causes necessitate this distinction between a first, separate cause and an intermediate cause that directly produces its effect; and second in Sections 2.2–2.3, why participation should imply such a distinction between participated and unparticipated causes. As we will see in the first section, Proclus' interpretation of the principle of causal synonymy combines both a Platonic interpretation of this principle—where the Form, Beauty-itself, causes similar, particular beautiful things—and an Aristotelian interpretation—where efficient causes produce their effect as the *same* in kind (as 'man causes man'), while numerically distinct. The later, developed Aristotelian distinction between primary and instrumental efficient causes gives Proclus the grounds to develop a notion of productive causes that are distinguished, in turn, into these two kinds—which follows the Platonic distinction between primary causes (αἰτία) and 'contributory' causes (συναίτία). In the second section, we will see that Proclus' view of participation is fundamentally different from previous Platonists, especially Plotinus. Proclus changes the notion of participation to imply that a thing participates not *directly* in the same principle, as for other participants, but only the immediate cause of that thing's property: either the enmattered form, or the proximate, separate principle which causes a given effect in its participant, as the participated intellect which causes the property of intellection in a particular soul.

These two considerations will be important when we investigate the One's causality in Chapter 4, where Proclus employs this notion of intermediaries below the One—namely the henads that we saw in Syrianus<sup>8</sup>—which transcend their participants but are each directly correlated and participated with their respective participant. This background will then give us the foundation to see how Proclus can claim the One's absolute transcendence, at the same time that it functions as a cause.

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point which Proclus takes to imply no efficient causality, and therefore an issue on which he critiques Aristotle. On this see Steel (1987).

8 Cf. p. 69–72.



## 2.1 The Building Blocks of Causality in Proclus

In regard to causality, Proclus is uniquely situated among earlier Platonists. He inherits both a general trend from certain Neoplatonists, like Porphyry, to harmonize Aristotle and Plato,<sup>9</sup> and a trend towards criticizing Aristotle from other Neoplatonists.<sup>10</sup> Like Syrianus, Proclus critiques Aristotle on issues like the unmoved mover, where Aristotle fails to make the latter an efficient cause and, moreover, a cause of being and not just motion.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, Proclus accepts Aristotle's basic causal framework to account for the chain of causes leading from material effects back unmoved, moving causes.<sup>12</sup> Proclus thus follows the majority of past Platonists who take for granted Aristotle's framework of four kinds of cause—formal, material, efficient, and final—and also add a fifth kind to the set—the 'paradigmatic'—and at times a sixth—the 'instrumental'.<sup>13</sup> Of the six kinds, Proclus subordinates the formal, material, and instrumental cause, as 'contributory causes' (συναιτία), under the efficient, paradigmatic, and final cause, as true causes (αἰτία). Under this schema, the four Aristotelian causes are re-ordered within a more general two-fold distinction going back to Plato, from dialogues like the *Phaedo*, where true causes, like the Form of Beauty, explain subordinate, instrumental causes, like the particular brushstrokes and colors in a painting that make up its beauty.<sup>14</sup> Proclus thus

- 9 See in general Karamanolis and Sheppard (2007), which shows the history of harmonization from Antiochus (second cent. B.C.) to Porphyry, and more recently Chiaradonna (2016) specifically on Porphyry's harmonizing approach. See also the recent papers on the reception of Aristotle in Falcon (2016).
- 10 On the relation between Syrianus and Aristotle, see D'Hoine (2016), Frede (2009), and Helmig (2009) (esp. 378–379, where Helmig notes the anti-Aristotelian divergence from Iamblichus).
- 11 See e.g. *In Parm.* 788,8–19; *In Tim.* 1, 266,28–268,24. Cf. D'Hoine (2016) 390–391, and Steel (1987). Compare Proclus' position to Ammonius, who attempts to show the opposite of Proclus: that Aristotle presents the unmoved mover as an efficient, as well as final, cause, and that the unmoved mover is a cause of being, as well as motion, since the being of both super-lunary and sublunary beings (for Ammonius) is being in motion. See Simplicius, *In De Cael.* 271,13–21; *In Phys.* 1360,24–1363,24. Cf. Griffin (2016) 403.
- 12 For a general background to this, see Steel (2003).
- 13 See Seneca, *Epist.* 65,7; Alcinoüs, *Didaskalikos* IX, 163,12–17; certain cases add a sixth cause, 'instrumental': Proclus, *In Tim.* 1, 263,19–30; Proclus, *In Parm.* 1059,11–15. Cf. Sorabji (2004) 138–40; Hankinson (1998) 337–338.
- 14 Plato, *Phd.* 100b1–e7; see esp. earlier, 99b2–6: 'Imagine not being able to distinguish the real cause (τὸ αἴτιον τῷ ὄντι) from that without which the cause would not be able to act as a cause. It is what the majority appear to do, like people groping in the dark; they call it a cause, thus giving it a name that does not belong to it' (trans. Grube). (τὸ γὰρ μὴ διελέσθαι ὁδὸν τ' εἶναι ὅτι ἄλλο μὲν τί ἐστι τὸ αἴτιον τῷ ὄντι, ἄλλο δὲ ἐκείνο ἄνευ οὗ τὸ αἴτιον οὐκ ἂν ποτ' εἴη



uses Aristotle's framework to show how Plato's approach is finally vindicated in his own view.

As we saw in Plotinus' ascent from lower kinds of unity to higher causes in *Enn.* VI.9.1–2,<sup>15</sup> true, proper causes for Proclus are greater than their effects and transcend them. Intellect is greater as a cause of Soul, for instance, insofar as Soul's being is characterized by discursivity, has distinct parts (or powers), and is composed of divisible and indivisible substance, whereas Intellect is eternally the same, partless, without composition, and without the discursivity of Soul.<sup>16</sup> What makes causes like Intellect 'greater' is the degree of their unity, both substantially and in their activity, in relation to the effect. On the one hand the Platonic view of the Forms' causality accounts for this premise, where Forms exercise their causality simply by their unity in relation to the participants which are divided up.<sup>17</sup> A second source behind Proclus' view is the Stoics' concept of the 'containing' cause (συνεκτικόν): as materialists, the Stoics held that all bodies are pervaded by 'pneuma' which holds together all bodies. For Stoics, pneuma becomes the material version of Aristotle's formal cause, insofar as it functions as the unifying cause of a given entity.<sup>18</sup> Proclus takes over the same causal concept, although he applies it to the power of the Forms and higher, immaterial principles rather than the restricted material sense it possessed for the Stoics.<sup>19</sup> The term, συνεκτικόν, then indicates a corollary about causes in general insofar as they specifically 'hold together' or directly unify their effects.<sup>20</sup>

Another, more important aspect of causality for Proclus, as we will see, is his use of Aristotle for the notion of causal synonymy, in particular where the cause's actuality is that by which the effect is brought about. Thus for Aristotle,

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αἴτιον· ὃ δὴ μοι φαίνονται ψηλαφῶντες οἱ πολλοὶ ὥσπερ ἐν σκότει, ἄλλοτρίῳ ὀνόματι προσχρῶμενοι, ὡς αἴτιον αὐτὸ προσαγορεύειν.)

15 Cf. p. 27–32.

16 Proclus, *ET Prop.*s. 190–191. On the question of Soul's unity with its different parts/powers, see Aristotle, *De Anima* I.5, 411b5–13, 18–19. Cf. Steel (2003) 89.

17 See e.g. in Plato's *Phaedo* where Socrates keeps referring to the Forms' power of 'binding together' and uniting (*Phd.* 99c5–6) by being 'itself by itself' (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό) (*Phd.* 100b5–7), in relation to the particular causes through which the Form brings about its effect.

18 Steel (2002) 79–81.

19 Although συνεκτικόν is not found in Plotinus, one can see the same idea, again, in *Enn.* VI.9.1–2. For the general Stoic background of this and other passages, see Meijer (1992a) 68–89.

20 For this reason, Proclus locates the first συνεκτικόν cause *not* in the One or Being, as for Plotinus, but rather in the middle intelligible-and-intellective triad. (By contrast, the intelligible triad/Being is the cause of unity.) Unity is then a more general concept than συνεκτικόν, since it grounds the latter. See *In Parm.* 909,18 ff.; cf. Steel (2002) 90–91.

only man in act (ἐνέργεια), for instance, can bring about another man in act. This may initially seem counter-intuitive for Proclus' purposes as a Platonist, where synonymy is also a factor in the Forms' causality: for instance, the Form of Beauty-itself brings about its character, 'beauty', as a particular property in the participant, yet the relation between Beauty-itself and a particular beautiful thing is asymmetrical. For Aristotle, the problem with this Platonic approach is that 'Beauty-itself' exists only potentially behind the effect of particular 'beauty',<sup>21</sup> whereas the cause which brings about its effect must exist in actuality, as Aristotle's common example that man causes man in actuality by also being in act—i.e. as an individual.<sup>22</sup> For Aristotle this makes transcendent Forms superfluous, since the formal cause can be sufficiently accounted for in particulars, while the efficient cause explains the true cause for a thing receiving its particular form. As earlier Platonists and Neoplatonists had done, Proclus, while accepting Aristotle's model, makes the transcendent Forms efficient causes, and in turn construes the actuality of the Forms as that by which particular forms come to be;<sup>23</sup> thus 'man causes man' on the particular level only in virtue of the Form of 'Man' existing in act and producing its property in particular men. Cases like particular man causing man, or fire producing heat, become instrumental efficient causes in relation to 'true' efficient causes like the Form of 'Man-itself', or 'Fire-itself', or also the principle, Nature, by which particular forms are brought about.<sup>24</sup>

21 See Aristotle, *Met.* A.9, 991b1–8, which combines both the criticism that Forms are not efficient causes, and the criticism of the separation of the formal cause, as such, from particulars in themselves. Although one should bear in mind that Aristotle's reading may not account for nuances in Plato's argument in the *Phaedo*. For a thorough analysis comparing Aristotle's claims with the *Phaedo*, see Fine (1984); cf. Fine (1987).

22 Put another way, Peleus as father, for example, causes Achilles in virtue of being a man in act; similarly fire, being heat in act, brings about heat in a block of iron that is potentially hot before roasting in the fire. Peleus is not more man than Achilles, nor is the fire necessarily of greater heat than that brought about in the iron block, but rather in both cases the cause's actuality in matching the effect's eventual actuality is that in virtue of which causation happens.

23 See *In Parm.* 791,21–795,6, where Proclus directly addresses the Aristotelian dictum, 'man causes man', and claims that individual causation is only possible in virtue of prior, actually-existing principles—ultimately the reason-principles (λόγοι) in the principle, Nature, and finally the transcendent Forms. Cf. *ET Prop.* 77 (discussed further below). See discussion of this in D'Hoine (2017) 112–117 and D'Hoine (2008) 73–78.

24 In addition to the two main principles of Intellect and Soul below the One, Proclus posits a distinct level between Soul and bodies with Nature: see *ET Prop.* 21, 24,22–25: 'From these things it is clear that for the nature of body there exists both unity and plurality, by which also the one Nature has the many natures dependent on it, and the many natures are derived from one Nature belonging to the whole'. (ἐκ δὲ τούτων φανερόν ὅτι καὶ τῇ φύσει τοῦ σώματος ὑπάρχει τό τε ἓν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος, καὶ ἡ τε μία φύσις τὰς πολλὰς ἔχει συννηρημένας

Given this, we should investigate how Proclus proves that 'true' efficient causes are necessarily greater than their effects, like transcendent Forms or principles like Nature or Soul, especially since Proclus presupposes this principle throughout his discussion of participated and unparticipated causes. As we will finally see, Proclus' position on efficient causes necessitates a distinction between true, primary causes—as they transcend their specific effect—and instrumental causes—as they are immanently involved in bringing about the effect. These two kinds eventually lead to the distinction between unparticipated and participated causes.

### 2.1.1 *The Cause as Greater Than Its Effect*

For Proclus' proof on efficient causes we may start in Proposition 7 in the *Elements of Theology*, where Proclus establishes that every productive cause (τὸ παρακτικόν) by its nature is greater than the effect it produces.<sup>25</sup> Proclus argues this by a *reductio ad absurdum* with the two other alternatives: either the cause is (1) equal to its effect or (2) inferior to its effect. The problem with the second option is relatively straightforward: the cause's furnishing power for the effect implies that it must, as it were, 'make itself more powerful' to communicate its effect by likeness to the product.<sup>26</sup> If this is so, the cause must be at least equal to, if not greater than, the effect. Implicit in Proclus' argument is the premise that nothing comes from nothing: the difference in power between the effect and its cause must necessarily come from the cause. With this in mind, Proclus

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καὶ αἱ πολλαὶ φύσεις ἐκ μιᾶς εἰσι τῆς τοῦ ὅλου φύσεως.) Thus Proclus construes the principle, Nature, like Intellect and Soul, in that it produces and derives other natures. Unlike Intellect and Soul, however, Nature does not appear to be unparticipated, strictly speaking, since it does not exist separately from its participants: see further Martijn (2010) 49. This suggests that the transcendent cause of Nature is ultimately the Demiurge (cf. Chlup (2012) 102, n. 103).

25 *ET* Prop. 7, 8,1–2. See Lloyd (1976), esp. 152–155, for a thorough analysis of this proposition, and the general history behind the thesis that 'efficient causes are greater than their effects'. Discussed further below.

26 *ET* Prop. 7, 8,17–25: 'But again the producer will not ever be inferior. For if it gives the produced entity being, it also furnishes power to it by its being. But if it is itself productive of all the power which is after it, it is able to make such a thing, as it were that thing. But if this is the case, it will also make itself more powerful. The means to this cannot be lacking, since it has power to make; nor is it not willing, since by nature all things desire the good'. (ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἔλαττον ἔσται ποτὲ τὸ παράγον. εἰ γὰρ αὐτὸ τὴν οὐσίαν τῷ παραγομένῳ δίδωσιν, αὐτὸ καὶ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῷ χορηγεῖ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν. εἰ δὲ αὐτὸ παρακτικόν ἐστι τῆς δυνάμεως τῷ μετ' αὐτὸ πάσης, καὶ αὐτὸ δύναται ποιεῖν τοιοῦτον, οἷον ἐκείνο. εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, καὶ ποιήσκειν ἂν ἑαυτὸ δυνατώτερον. οὔτε γὰρ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι κωλύει, παρούσης τῆς ποιητικῆς δυνάμεως· οὔτε τὸ μὴ βούλεσθαι, πάντα γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὀρέγεται κατὰ φύσιν.)

relies on the presupposition that ‘like causes like’, so that the cause must be *at least* equal to its effect. However, even this by itself will not be enough, as the *reductio* for option (1) shows:

The produced entity from [the cause] then either (A) also has power as itself productive of another particular entity, or (B) it subsists (ὑπάρχει)<sup>27</sup> as entirely sterile. But if it is sterile (B), being impotent, it is inferior in itself to the producer, and it is unequal to the latter which is generative and has the power of making. And (A) if it is itself productive of others, either (A<sub>1</sub>) it also produces something equal to itself, and this in like manner toward all things, and then all beings (τὰ ὄντα πάντα) will be equal to each other, and, since the producer is always constitutive of each successive thing as equal to itself, no one will be greater than the other; or (A<sub>2</sub>) [if it also produces what is] unequal, it will no longer be itself equal to the producer—for that which makes equals belongs to equal powers. But things unequal to each other are from these things, if indeed the producer is equal to that which is before it, but what is after it is unequal to itself. Therefore what is produced is necessarily not equal to the producer.

ET Prop. 7, 8,4–16

τὸ τοίνυν ἀπὸ τούτου παραγόμενον ἢ δύναμιν ἔχει καὶ αὐτὸ παρακτικὴν ἄλλου τινὸς ἢ ἄγονον ὑπάρχει παντελῶς. ἀλλ’ εἰ μὲν ἄγονον εἶη, κατ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τοῦ παράγοντος ἡλάττωται, καὶ ἔστιν ἄνισον ἐκείνῳ, γονίμῳ ὄντι καὶ δύναμιν ἔχοντι τοῦ ποιεῖν, ἀδρανὲς ὄν. εἰ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸ παρακτικόν ἐστιν ἄλλων, ἢ καὶ αὐτὸ ἴσον ἑαυτῷ παράγει, καὶ τοῦτο ὡσαύτως ἐπὶ πάντων, καὶ ἔσται τὰ ὄντα πάντα ἴσα ἀλλήλοις καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἄλλου κρεῖττον, αἰεὶ τοῦ παράγοντος ἴσον ἑαυτῷ τὸ ἐφεξῆς ὑφιστάντος· ἢ ἄνισον, καὶ οὐκέτ’ ἂν ἴσον εἶη τῷ αὐτὸ παράγοντι· δυνάμεων γὰρ ἴσων ἐστὶ τὸ τὰ ἴσα ποιεῖν· τὰ δ’ ἐκ τούτων ἄνισα ἀλλήλοις, εἴπερ τὸ μὲν παράγον τῷ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἴσον, αὐτῷ δὲ τὸ μετ’ αὐτὸ ἄνισον. οὐκ ἄρα ἴσον εἶναι δεῖ τῷ παράγοντι τὸ παραγόμενον.

27 Here and throughout this work I generally translate ὑπαρξίς as ‘subsistence’, while ὑπόστασις as ‘existence’ or (rarely) ‘particular existence’. Proclus tends to use ὑπαρξίς in a more restricted sense to indicate the ‘essence’ or specific existence of an entity—for instance, Being-itself καθ’ ὑπαρξιν compared to ‘being’ as a property in Intellect κατὰ μέθεξιν; by contrast Proclus seems to use ὑπόστασις in a general, looser sense to indicate the existence *in some way* of a given entity: e.g. the contrast between παρῃπόστασις as indicating an accidental existence, and ὑπόστασις as something existing by itself. For further background and a survey on ὑπαρξίς/ὑπόστασις in Proclus, see Steel (1994).

Proclus' proof in this section depends on the status of the produced effect in relation to the producer itself. This takes two considerations: either the product is (B) 'sterile' and does not produce another effect, or (A) it produces another entity. For the first option, (B), Proclus takes the criterion of productivity, or lack of productivity, to indicate whether one entity is greater than the other. Given this, (B) proves what Proclus wants: the cause is greater than the effect, since the effect does not have productive power in contrast to the cause. The second option (A) then considers whether the effect, itself, produces another entity which is either equal (A<sub>1</sub>) or unequal (A<sub>2</sub>) to itself. The latter option, as unequal, implies a kind of law of transitivity: if the effect's produced entity is unequal, while the effect is equal to the cause, then the prior cause of the effect should be continuous in the causal chain and in turn reflect the same causal asymmetry between the effect and its produced, unequal entity. In other words:  $Cause = Effect_1 \neq Effect_2$ . If so, then the cause is not equal to the effect:  $Cause \neq Effect_2$ , therefore  $Cause \neq Effect$  (simply).

However the conclusion to the other option, with the product of the effect as equal (A<sub>1</sub>), may be questionable at first glance. Proclus proposes that if the cause's effect produces another *equal* product, then the chain would continue indefinitely, which Proclus implicitly suggests is absurd when he says, 'no one [being] will be greater than the other'. In other words,  $Cause = Effect_1 = Effect_2 = Effect_3 \dots$ . Why this should be problematic is not immediately apparent: for instance, one could think of Aristotle's example of man causing man, once again, which would seem to be the same kind of production that happens in (A<sub>2</sub>).<sup>28</sup> The *reductio* here seems to assume that greater and lesser beings must exist, but this would then be what the proposition tries to establish for causes, suggesting circularity.

One solution to this difficulty is that Proclus presupposes a gradation of beings as a common notion or given premise in the background. One may initially wonder whether Proclus already establishes that there is a gradation of beings in the earlier propositions—for instance in Prop's. 5–6, proving the One's priority to all types of plurality. Although he may have this implicitly in mind, Proclus does not explicitly reference these propositions as he usually would in the *Elements*—reflecting the *more geometrico* method of the work.<sup>29</sup>

28 Lloyd (1976) appears to assume this in his analysis of Aristotle, 149–151, and his conclusion of Proclus assuming a Platonic framework for the 'transmission theory' (i.e. the principle of causal synonymy) in 154.

29 On Proclus' geometrical method throughout his works, especially in the *Elements of Theology* and *Elements of Physics*, see Martijn (2014), Martijn and Gerson (2017) 50–61, Nikulin (2003). Cf. below, p. 158 n.11.

Instead Proclus seems to take for granted that there is a gradation of beings as a common notion—a premise that, in A.C. Lloyd's opinion, does not take account of the sensible world but rather assumes already the hierarchical orders of intelligible beings.<sup>30</sup> Yet one need not suppose, as Lloyd implicitly does, that Proclus assumes what he eventually goes on to prove: Proclus may be accounting for hierarchies between beings that can be perceived in the sensible world. For instance, on looking at the physical world, one could point to a natural hierarchy in beings, with animals having a higher, superior being than plants, or rational animals in relation to irrational, and so on.<sup>31</sup> If one accepts this apparent hierarchy, then the relation between higher and lower beings would necessarily be reflected in the causality of each higher and lower kind of being. To take an example of a genus/species tree, the cause, 'animal' (which encompasses a greater number of species) would be greater than the effect of, say, 'non-rational' (a lesser number of species), while the effect of 'four-legged' from 'non-rational' would be lesser than its cause, and so on. It is this basic consideration that Proclus may be pre-supposing in (*Ar*), one that may address Lloyd's objection of Prop. 7's universality.

Still, Lloyd's difficulty raises a more general issue in Proclus' notion of efficient causality. Recalling Aristotle, cases like man causing man still seem to stand as counter-examples to Prop. 7's conclusion: the father of Socrates is not more 'man' than Socrates himself—instead, they both are equally 'man' in kind (*εἶδος*).<sup>32</sup> Further, if each man produced is productive of another man, this

30 Lloyd (1976) 154: 'In fact the *Elements of theology* is not concerned with the physical world, and the *ὄντα* he has in mind will be the various orders and kinds of intelligible, and for him supra-intelligible, realities; and this amounts to much the same thing as to say that he has in mind a single chain of being'.

31 Already we have skimmed the same point earlier, in Proclus on *συνεκτικόν* causes, and earlier in p. 26–29. See also Opsomer (2017) 139–141 in support of an 'empirical' interpretation offered here, esp. in p. 140, when he comments on Proclus' interpretation of Plato's *Tim.* 37c6–d7: 'The upshot of this passage [i.e. for Proclus] is that the study of the structures of our world reveals the intelligible structures that they mirror: we observe the natural world and see objects and living creatures in motion, all subject to time, which is itself subjected to number. From this observation we can infer that the eternal Intelligible Living Being participates in Eternity, also understood as Life, which in turn participates in the unity of Being'.

32 See for instance Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.3, 1070b27–30, where Aristotle shows that there is no necessity for Platonic Forms, on his reading: 'For man produces man, each individual an individual; and similarly in the arts; for the medical art is the formula of health'. (*ἀνθρωπος γὰρ ἀνθρωπον γεννᾷ, ὁ καθ' ἕκαστον τὸν τινά· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν τεχνῶν· ἡ γὰρ ἰατρικὴ τέχνη ὁ λόγος τῆς υἰγείας ἐστίν.*) (Cf. *Met.* Z.9, esp. 1034a21–30.) Aristotle emphasizes here the equality between cause and effect, especially where 'each individual [produces] an individual' (*ὁ καθ' ἕκαστον τὸν τινά*).

would seem to defy Proclus' proof in (A1), since each is the same 'man'. In this, Proclus runs into a limit for a strict version of causal synonymy coming from Aristotle, insofar as the effect produced by the cause necessitates an equality between cause and effect both in the form (or species) and in degree. This dynamic leads Lloyd to conclude that 'the principle of the cause being greater than its effect is the result of superimposing more Platonism on a transmission theory of causation'<sup>33</sup>—i.e. the principle of causal synonymy from Aristotle.

On the one hand, Lloyd is generally right on this observation, especially in terms of the ultimate Platonic provenance in Proclus' framework, yet Lloyd ends up underplaying the Aristotelian background behind Proclus' notion of efficient causality: in his view, neither Aristotle nor other Aristotelian commentators, like Alexander of Aphrodisias, support the idea that efficient causes are greater than their effects.<sup>34</sup> Lloyd does correctly note Plato's ultimate influence in Proclus, especially from the *Timaeus* and implicitly the *Phaedo* where Plato distinguishes between 'true causes' (αἰτίαι, αἰτίαι) and 'contributory causes' (συναίτια);<sup>35</sup> as noted in the beginning, true, 'real' causes like the soul (or the Demiurge, in the *Timaeus* context) have the final reason 'why' in causation, while contributory causes lack the full 'reason' or understanding of what comes about.<sup>36</sup> In this regard αἰτίαι are 'greater' than συναίτια because they are the first causes that order and arrange the concordant causes with regard to the final effect.

However despite Lloyd's contention, Aristotle's discussion of efficient causality does reference a specific case that aligns with the Platonist interpretation taken up by Proclus—a point we should briefly discuss here. When Aristotle defines the efficient cause among the four kinds of 'cause' in *Physics* II.3, he indicates different examples that fit the notion,<sup>37</sup> which one could take in

33 Lloyd (1976) 154.

34 Lloyd (1976) 150–151.

35 Plato, *Tim.* 46c7–e2.

36 Plato, *Phil.* 27a8–9 makes a more straightforward distinction by stating that what is subservient to the cause (τὸ δουλεύον ... αἰτίαι) is not the same as the cause (αἰτία). Proclus draws directly on this in *ET* Prop. 75 (70,35), as well as *In Tim.* I, 298,26, 369,8; *In Eucl.* 139,20. Cf. Steel (2003) 178, esp. n. 9.

37 Aristotle, *Phys.* II.3, 194b30–32; 195a21–23: 'Again, the primary source (or "principle") of the change or rest, as the man who deliberated is a cause, the father of the child, and generally what makes of what is made and what changes of what is changed. [...] The seed and the doctor and the one who deliberated, and generally the maker, are each the principle from which the change or rest originates' (trans. Hardie/Gaye, modified). (ἔτι ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ πρώτη ἢ τῆς ἡρεμῆσεως, οἷον ὁ βουλευσας αἴτιος, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ τέκνου, καὶ ὁ ἰατὴρ τοῦ ποιῶντος τοῦ ποιουμένου καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλον τοῦ μεταβαλλομένου. ... τὸ δὲ σπέρμα καὶ ὁ ἱατρὸς καὶ ὁ βουλευσας καὶ ὁ ἰατὴρ, πάντα ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ στάσεως [ἢ κινήσεως].)



either an instrumental or primary sense: for instance the ‘seed’ of a man is just as much an efficient cause as the father of a man, let alone the doctor’s contemplation of health for the patient, as well as the doctor just in himself. Initially this implies a deflationary view of efficient causes, such that Aristotle would not recognize ‘primary’ or ‘secondary’ efficient causes. Yet we find suggestions towards this kind of distinction in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* 1.2 and *Metaphysics* α.1: in the former, Aristotle claims that that because of which (δι’ ὃ) we love certain things is better (μᾶλλον) loved in itself;<sup>38</sup> in the latter, Aristotle uses the example of fire as that by which (καθ’ ὃ) other things receive heat, so that it possesses heat in itself in the highest degree (μάλιστα).<sup>39</sup> In both cases Aristotle refers to the cause as possessing that property either to a greater degree (μᾶλλον—for *Post. An.* 1.2) or to the greatest degree (μάλιστα—for *Met.* α.1) in relation to its effects.<sup>40</sup> With these passages, Lloyd contends that Aristotle’s notion of efficient causality overall is deflationary: both passages are an enigma in Aristotle’s overall framework, leading Lloyd to conclude, ‘I cannot think of a better explanation of the two passages in Aristotle than a rather vague appeal to Platonism’.<sup>41</sup>

The problem with Lloyd’s conclusion is that he does not account for other passages discussing efficient causality that support *Post. An.* 1.2 and *Met.* α.1: namely Aristotle’s discussion of affected/unaffected causes in places like *On Generation and Corruption* 1.6–7, and Aristotle’s discussion later in the *Physics* (esp. VIII) of the first cause of each chain of moved causes and effects. In both cases Aristotle posits a particular kind of efficient cause that sets its

38 Aristotle, *Post. An.* 1.2, 72a29–30: ‘For always that because of which each thing exists, it exists as greater than each, like that because of which we love something is that thing as loved to a greater degree (μᾶλλον)’. (αἰεὶ γὰρ δι’ ὃ ὑπάρχει ἕκαστον, ἐκείνῳ μᾶλλον ὑπάρχει, οἷον δι’ ὃ φιλοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνο φίλον μᾶλλον.)

39 Aristotle, *Met.* α.1, 993b24–26: ‘Each thing is itself the greatest (μάλιστα) among other things by which the synonymous property exists for the others—e.g. fire, which is the cause of heat in everything else hot, is the hottest thing’. (ἕκαστον δὲ μάλιστα αὐτὸ τῶν ἄλλων καθ’ ὃ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπάρχει τὸ συνώνυμον (οἷον τὸ πῦρ θερμότεον· καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ αἵτιον τοῦτο τῆς θερμότητος).) Cf. the general discussion of these passages in Lloyd (1976) 149–151.

40 Although it should be noted, both examples illustrate different principles: the ‘more loved’ example from *Post. An.* 1.2 is used by Aristotle to illustrate how the first premise of every demonstration—like axioms—acts as the foundation of knowledge for the rest of the demonstration (cf. *Post. An.* 1.2, 72a25–29; 72a31–72b4); the fire example from *Met.* α.1 illustrates the dependence of a series of derivative truths on what is eternally true—and in turn that the principles of eternal things in themselves must always be true (cf. Aristotle, *Met.* α.1, 993b26–31; see also *Met.* Δ.18, where Aristotle discusses καθ’ ὃ predication (1022a14–25) in relation to καθ’ αὐτὸ predication (1022a25–36)).

41 Lloyd (1976) 151.



respective causal series in motion without being reciprocally affected and/or moved by another object. It is ultimately this context in which we are to understand cases like the fire example from *Met.* α.1, where there is an implicit priority of the respective first cause in relation to its respective chain of effects.

In the case of *On Gen. and Corr.* 1.6–7, Aristotle's discussion implicitly follows from a claim he makes in *Physics* 111.2, that the cause of motion is reciprocally acted on by the object it moves.<sup>42</sup> Aristotle here presupposes that all acts of motion from movers which are, themselves, subject to motion are the result of contact (θίξει), or touch (ἄπτεσθαι).<sup>43</sup> The mover, then, is itself affected by what it acts on: for instance, a hot stone, if dropped in cold water, may act on the water by transmitting its accident, heat, to it—but then the stone in turn is acted on by the water's cold, and in turn becomes cold. In *On Gen. and Corr.* 1.6 Aristotle considers the possibility of causes that are *not* affected when bringing something into motion: for instance a man may grieve us, and in this sense 'touch' us, but we do not touch or affect him.<sup>44</sup> As Aristotle elaborates in 1.7, the differentiating factor of such unaffected causes is that they do not share the same kind of underlying matter, or 'kind', which is otherwise the basis for reciprocal contact:<sup>45</sup> thus the form or account of 'health', as thought and contemplated by the doctor, would be such an unaffected cause inasmuch as it is without matter in relation to the patient, while the food prescribed by that form to the patient is what is affected, and transformed, as it acts on the body.<sup>46</sup> At the end of 1.7 Aristotle implicitly returns back to the fire example

42 Aristotle, *Phys.* 111.2, 202a3–12.

43 Although Aristotle mainly uses the language of 'touch' (ἄπτεσθαι) in *GC* 1.6–7.

44 Aristotle, *GC* 1.6, 323a25–32.

45 Aristotle, *GC* 1.7, 324b4–12: 'Those among productive entities (τῶν ποιητικῶν), then, which do not have their form in matter, are unaffected; but those which do have their form in matter are affected. For we maintain that one and the same matter is equally, so to say, the basis of either of the two opposed things—being as it were a kind; and that which can be hot must be made hot, provided that the heating agent is present and comes near. Hence (as we have said) some of the producers are unaffected while others are affected; and what holds of motion is the same also for the producers. For [as in motion] the first mover is unmoved, so among producers the first producer (τὸ πρῶτον ποιοῦν) is unaffected'. (ὅσα μὲν οὖν μὴ ἐν ὕλῃ ἔχει τὴν μορφὴν, ταῦτα μὲν ἀπαθὴ τῶν ποιητικῶν, ὅσα δ' ἐν ὕλῃ, παθητικά. τὴν μὲν γὰρ ὕλιν λέγομεν ὁμοίως ὥς εἰπεῖν τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι τῶν ἀντικειμένων ὅποτερουσιν, ὥσπερ γένος ὄν, τὸ δὲ δυνάμενον θερμὸν εἶναι παρόντος τοῦ θερμαντικοῦ καὶ πλησιάζοντος ἀνάγκη θερμαίνεσθαι· διό, καθάπερ εἴρηται, τὰ μὲν τῶν ποιητικῶν ἀπαθὴ τὰ δὲ παθητικά. καὶ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ κινήσεως τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχει τρόπον καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ποιητικῶν· ἐκεῖ τε γὰρ τὸ πρῶτον κινεῖν ἀκίνητον, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ποιητικῶν τὸ πρῶτον ποιοῦν ἀπαθές.)

46 Aristotle, *GC* 1.7, 324a35–b3. Cf. Bodnár and Pellegrin (2009) 280–281.

from *Met.* α.1 and concludes that, while fire contains the heat in matter, if heat as a form were separate from its matter (although impossible, as Aristotle concludes), or if any entity could exist without matter, then it would also be unaffected.<sup>47</sup> In this instance, while fire could still be affected by, e.g., the cold in water—to the degree that the fire is put out—fire contains the property of heat in an essential way: thus *if* heat existed separately, fire-as-heat would not be affected.<sup>48</sup>

Aristotle's discussion of unaffected causes in *On Gen. and Corr.* ultimately forms the conceptual backdrop for considering the first causes of different chains of motion, as discussed in *Physics* VIII: particularly the soul and the unmoved movers behind the spheres of the fixed stars and planets. For soul, Aristotle in *Physics* VIII.4–5 proves that instances of self-motion, as in living things, must involve a distinction between two components: an unmoved mover and a moved mover.<sup>49</sup> The soul then fills the position of the unmoved mover for the self-moved entity within a given chain of causes, as the stone that is moved by the stick that, finally, goes back to a self-moved entity, as the human behind the hand. Just like the case of fire and heat, the soul brings about its effect of life in the body, and thus motion through the body, through causal synonymy: 'The mover on the other hand is already in actuality (ἐνέργεια), just as the hot thing produces heat and generally that which produces the form possesses it. [...] Similarly, too, in every other case where the mover must have the synonymous property'.<sup>50</sup> Thus the property of life and motion in the body must go back to a source of motion that is not moved or affected by anything else—i.e. the soul as the living body's immanent form, and therefore the actuality of life in the body.<sup>51</sup>

47 Aristotle, *GC* 1.7, 324b18–22.

48 Whether 'heat' is part of the definition of fire's essence (οὐσία)—thus, καθ' αὐτό simply—rather than a necessary accident (cf. *Met.* Z.5, 1030b14–27) is unclear in Aristotle. Simplicius, *In Cat.* 254,7, identifies heat as part of the substance of fire 'by substantial participation', thus implicitly the former option (καθ' αὐτό). The status of heat's relation to fire became a controversial issue in late antiquity into Avicenna: on this, see Benevise (2017), esp. 240–246 for the reception of the issue in for late antique Greek authors. Here, also, Lloyd (1976)'s conclusion of 'Platonism' in Aristotle is mystifying, inasmuch as the *Met.* α.1 references a key example of Aristotle's notion of causality.

49 Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII.5 257b28–258a5.

50 Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII.5 257b9–11: τὸ δὲ κινεῖν ἤδη ἐνεργείᾳ ἔστιν, ὅσον θερμαίνει τὸ θερμὸν καὶ ὅλως γεννᾷ τὸ ἔχον τὸ εἶδος. ὥσθ' ἅμα τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ θερμὸν ἔσται καὶ οὐ θερμὸν. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστον, ὅσων τὸ κινεῖν ἀνάγκη ἔχειν τὸ συνώνυμον.

51 Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* II.1, esp. 412a27–b24. For a comparison of Aristotle's doctrine of soul in relation to the issues of reciprocal affectability in *GC* 1.6–7, see Buchheim (2008) 81–82, 85–86, 92.

Aristotle similarly extends this argument to the unmoved movers in *Physics* VIII.6 and *Met.* Λ.6, where their actuality is responsible for the motion of the first moved movers—namely the rotating spheres of the stars and planets. However a dis-analogy also exists here: the soul is part of a form-matter composite, whereas the unmoved movers of the spheres are unmoved absolutely rather than *per accidens* like the soul.<sup>52</sup> In this case, causal synonymy works differently: the actuality of each unmoved mover is not the actuality of a specific physical entity, as for the soul, but is instead a separately-existing actuality for itself respectively.<sup>53</sup> Despite the fact that Aristotle seems to construe the unmoved mover solely as a final cause in *Met.* Λ.7,<sup>54</sup> Aristotle's description still fits with the unaffected productive cause (ποιητικόν) in *On Gen. and Corr.* I.7, in similar terms to the earlier example of the man who gives grief by 'touching' us, though we do not touch him.<sup>55</sup>

In both instances of the soul and unmoved mover, we see that Aristotle indicates a specific kind of efficient causality that is distinct from subordinate causes—as for instance, moved entities that cause motion, like the hot stone which has already been heated by fire which warms the water. This should help to address A.C. Lloyd's conundrum and illuminate Aristotle's claim in *Met.* α.1 about certain kinds of causes, like fire, that contain the property they cause to the highest degree: insofar as they begin the series of changes or produce the effect, they cannot be reciprocally affected, and in this regard they must contain the effect they bring about essentially in a way not possessed by the ensuing affected entities in the causal chain. While this implicit distinction between two kinds of essential cause is not explicitly brought out in Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias makes the distinction explicit with his notion of primary and instrumental efficient causes.<sup>56</sup> Thus in Alexander's reading of the causal examples from *Physics* II.3, the person who deliberates is more a true,

52 Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII.6, esp. 259b20–31.

53 Cf. Bodnár and Pellegrin (2009) 289–290.

54 Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.7, 1072b3–7. Although other Neoplatonists, like Ammonius (Proclus' disciple, somewhat ironically), interpret Aristotle's unmoved mover as an efficient and final cause, Proclus (e.g. in *In Tim.* I, 266,21–268,24) also interprets Aristotle as making the unmoved mover a final cause only, for which he critiques Aristotle for not making the unmoved mover an efficient cause—namely insofar as it *directly* produces an effect, rather than indirectly as we have been describing. Cf. Steel (1987). For an overview of differing interpretations on the causality of Aristotle's unmoved mover, see among others Sorabji (2004) 164–170 and Sorabji (1988) 249–285.

55 Cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII.10, 267b7–9. On this passage in contrast to Aristotle's discussion of soul, see Buchheim (2008) 84–86.

56 Testified in Simplicius, *In Phys.* 315,7–19.

and thus primary, efficient cause, than the doctor doing the work by himself, or especially the seed which is reciprocally acted upon in its causal activity. Once more this fits Aristotle's discussion of unaffected and affected causes from *On Gen. and Corr.* 1.7.

Returning to Proclus, we can now see how the Aristotelian background, especially articulated in Alexander, finds its way into Proclus' framework in Prop. 7: although Aristotle himself would not concede the hard distinction Plato posits between 'true' and instrumental causes, Proclus ends up employing the Aristotelian distinction of efficient causes within a more general Platonic backdrop for understanding causes in relation to higher kinds of beings. This harmonization comes out later in *ET* Prop. 75, where Proclus implicitly follows Alexander in distinguishing between primary and instrumental causes:

*Every cause properly called transcends its finished product.*

For, being in the product, either the cause would be a complementary part of the product or it would in some way need the product for its own existence, and by this it would be incomplete compared to the effect. That which exists in the final product is rather a contributory cause (συναίτιον) than a cause (αἴτιον), being either a part of the generated thing or an instrument (ὄργανον) of the producer: for both the part exists within the generated thing, subsisting (ὑπάρχον) as less complete than the whole; and the instrument serves the producer for the process of generation, but is unable to determine for itself the measures of production. Therefore every cause properly called (κυρίως), inasmuch as it both is more perfect than that which is from it, and itself furnishes the measure for generation, transcends the instruments, the elements, and in general all that is described as a contributory cause.

πάν τὸ κυρίως αἴτιον λεγόμενον ἐξήρηται τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος.

ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ὄν, ἢ συμπληρωτικὸν αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχον ἢ δεόμενόν πως αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ εἶναι, ἀτελέστερον ἂν εἴη ταύτῃ τοῦ αἰτιατοῦ. τὸ δὲ ἐν τῷ ἀποτελέσματι ὄν συναίτιόν ἐστι μᾶλλον ἢ αἴτιον, ἢ μέρος ὄν τοῦ γινομένου ἢ ὄργανον τοῦ ποιούντος· τό τε γὰρ μέρος ἐν τῷ γινομένῳ ἐστίν, ἀτελέστερον ὑπάρχον τοῦ ὅλου, καὶ τὸ ὄργανον τῷ ποιούντι πρὸς τὴν γένεσιν δουλεύει, τὰ μέτρα τῆς ποιήσεως ἀφορίζειν ἑαυτῷ μὴ δυνάμενον. ἅπαν ἄρα τὸ κυρίως αἴτιον, εἴ γε καὶ τελειότερον ἐστὶ τοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ μέτρον αὐτὸ τῇ γενέσει παρέχεται, καὶ τῶν ὀργάνων ἐξήρηται καὶ τῶν στοιχείων καὶ πάντων ἀπλῶς τῶν καλουμένων συναίτιων.

Here we see Proclus refining what he initially sets out in Prop. 7: the cause 'properly-called' (κυρίως) is not just greater but must also transcend its effect. Following the *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*, Proclus categorizes the other kinds of causes as 'contributory causes' (συναίτια): particularly the 'instrumental cause' (τὸ ὄργανον) and the 'elements' (στοιχεῖα). What distinguishes the latter is that they 'subsist' as part of the ontological components of the entity in question—which Proclus elsewhere specifies as the formal and material cause.<sup>57</sup> Instrumental causes by contrast remain distinct from the effect as συναίτια, since they are proximate efficient causes and function as intermediaries between the first, efficient cause and the final product. An example of this would be the principle, Nature, which for Proclus is not equivalent to the formal cause, as one might read Aristotle's definition,<sup>58</sup> but instead actively brings about the production of enmattered forms through the inherent formative principles (λόγοι) that it receives from the transcendent Forms.<sup>59</sup> In this respect Proclus adjusts his understanding of Nature within the interpretation of the *Timeaus'* Demiurge as an 'instrument'—or rather mediator—in the formation of matter: while unlike Soul, which is separate from matter, Nature fits with the *Timeaus'* intermediate type of being that is divided about bodies.<sup>60</sup> Thus as immanent within bodies, Nature cannot be an efficient cause in itself without reference to a prior, transcendent cause like Soul.<sup>61</sup>

57 *In Tim.* 1, 261,15–18; cf. Simplicius, *In Phys.* 3,16–19. Elsewhere Proclus classifies final and paradigmatic causes, alongside the efficient cause, as under the 'proper' (κυρίως) cause: see *In Parm.* 983,1–2. Proclus (in Damascius, *In Phil.* 114,1–19) may also implicitly agree with Iamblichus, who subordinates the paradigmatic and final under the efficient cause (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 327,6 ff.); cf. Steel (2003) 182. For the full list of causes—between efficient, paradigmatic, final (for αἰτία properly) and material, formal, and instrumental (for συναίτια), see also *In Tim.* 1, 263,19–264,3 and *In Alc.* 168,21–169,2.

58 Aristotle, *Phys.* 11.1, 193a30–b12. For Proclus' interpretation, see *In Tim.* 1, 10,6–7.

59 *In Tim.* 1, 10,15–21. For a detailed analysis of Proclus' view of Nature, see Martijn (2010) 19–65.

60 Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 35a2–3.

61 Perhaps related to the impossibility of Nature to be an efficient cause (*qua* transcendent), Proclus is notably ambivalent on whether there is an unparticipated monad that is 'Nature-itself', where Proclus typically divides each level of being into unparticipated/participated classes (as we will discuss more below). On this issue see Martijn (2010) 39–54, and Martijn's conclusion in 43: '... for Proclus the existence of an imparticipable monad of Nature is beyond dispute, and that he dissolves the paradox of the imparticipable monad simply by not calling it a nature. This may not sound like a solution at all, and in a sense it is not. I maintain that in the case of Nature Proclus has to bend the rules of his own metaphysics in order to allow for a lowest transitional hypostasis (after Soul) between the intelligible realm and the realm of the sensible'.

As we will later see, the significance of Prop. 75 is that it gives us an important context for Proclus' distinction between unparticipated and participated causes. Although the latter are themselves true αἰτία rather than συναίτια, Proclus employs an analogous argument for distinguishing participated from unparticipated causes: insofar as the latter are responsible for the effect across all participants, the participated then becomes an analogous 'instrument' of the unparticipated as that by which the effect comes about.

### 2.1.2 ἐνέργεια, δύναμις, and Causal Synonymy in Proclus

While Proclus establishes that true causes transcend both their effects and contributory causes (συναίτια), we may still wonder what necessitates the productive cause employing a συναίτιος, or an instrument (ὄργανον), in every case. Although one may take for granted Alexander's distinction between primary and instrumental efficient causes, it is not clear on Aristotle's causal model that every primary efficient cause needs or employs an instrumental cause. The first unmoved mover is one example of this: for Aristotle only two terms suffice, between the unmoved mover (as what exists purely in actuality/ἐνέργεια) and the first moved mover (as that which is always being brought to act, as moving in a circle).<sup>62</sup> On Aristotle's definition of motion back in *Physics* III.1–3, only the actuality of the external cause of motion (i.e. the efficient cause) is needed to account for the moved thing coming into act. For Proclus, as we will see, this picture is subtly but importantly changed: a middle 'complete power' (τελεία δύναμις) is added between the source of actuality and the 'incomplete power' (ἀτελής δύναμις)—standing in for Aristotle's moved object. This middle category plays essentially the same role as the instrumental cause earlier discussed, and it becomes necessary to explain how the actualized 'form' or property comes about in the effect.

We find Proclus effectively restating Aristotle's principle of prior actuality<sup>63</sup> in *ET* Prop. 77, when he asserts that all that exists potentially is brought to actuality (εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖα) by an entity which is in actuality what that thing is in potentiality.<sup>64</sup> In the proposition, Proclus recognizes that the potential cannot bring itself into act, which recalls Aristotle's argument in *Physics* VIII.5 that self-moving entities do not exist as simple wholes: in other words, they cannot

62 Aristotle, *Met.* A.7, esp. 1072a19–27, b5–10.

63 To borrow the term from Hankinson (1998) 449.

64 *ET* Prop. 77, 72,20–30. The language of motion is notably left out in the proposition, perhaps reflecting Proclus' application of this principle to the intelligible realm prior to physical motion. On the issue of motion in the intelligible and physical realms, see Opsomer (2009) and Gersh (1973).

act on themselves in the same respect<sup>65</sup> without positing the distinction between unmoved and moved movers.<sup>66</sup> To this degree Proclus faithfully follows Aristotle's model.

It is later in *ET* Prop. 79 that Proclus partially shifts away from Aristotle's notion of actuality, when he argues that all that 'comes to be' (πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον) involves a complete power (δύναμιν τελείαν), pertaining to the producer, and an incomplete power (δύναμιν ἀτελή), pertaining to the effect.<sup>67</sup> Here Proclus references Aristotle's own distinction between active and passive δύναμις in *Met.* Θ.1: for every (passive) potentiality/δύναμις of B to be acted on by A, there is a corresponding (active) power/δύναμις for A to act on B.<sup>68</sup> Passive potentiality is then derived from active potentiality, which Aristotle indicates as the source of motion<sup>69</sup> (paralleling the definition of efficient cause in *Phys.* 11.3). Where Proclus implicitly differs from Aristotle is when he claims that *every* actuality (ἐνέργεια) proceeds from an indwelling power (ἐκ δυνάμεως τῆς ἐνούσης): 'If the producer were to be without power, how would it act and produce another?'<sup>70</sup> For Aristotle, all active δύναμις implies actuality, but not every actuality necessarily implies active power. One sees this later in *Met.* Θ.8, where Aristotle establishes the primacy of actuality to potentiality, implicitly in both active and passive senses.<sup>71</sup> A case in point is Aristotle's emphasis in *Met.* Λ.6 that the unmoved mover must be entirely in actuality, prior to δύναμις in both passive and even active senses, since it guarantees the eternal motion of the stars and planets.<sup>72</sup> Given this, Proclus does not entirely disagree in the end: although ἐνέργεια implies active, or complete, δύναμις, Proclus makes active δύναμις dependent on a thing's subsistence (ὑπαρξίς), so that δύναμις and ἐνέργεια come

65 See for instance Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII.5, 257a12–17, with the problematic example of the teacher undergoing learning in the same respect in which he teaches. See also *Met.* Θ.1, 1046a28–29.

66 Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII.5, 257b30–258a21. Cf. Opsomer (2009) 207–209, Gersh (1978) 28, n. 6.

67 *ET* Prop. 79, 74.18–26.

68 Aristotle, *Met.* Θ.1, 1046a9–15. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 11.5, 417a22–b1, where he makes a similar, if parallel, two-fold distinction between first and second potentiality, using the example of a potential knower: 'The one [sense of a potential knower] because his kind or matter is such and such, the other because he can reflect when he wants to, if nothing external prevents him'. (ὁ μὲν ὅτι τὸ γένος τοιοῦτον καὶ ἡ ὕλη, ὁ δ' ὅτι βουλευθεὶς δυνατός θεωρεῖν, ἂν μὴ τι κωλύσῃ τῶν ἑξωθεν.)

69 Aristotle, *Met.* Θ.1, 1046a15–18.

70 *ET* Prop. 79, 74.22–23: εἴτε γὰρ τὸ ποιοῦν μὴ ἔχοι δύναμιν, πῶς ἐνεργήσῃ καὶ ποιήσῃ εἰς ἄλλο.

71 Cf. esp. Aristotle, *Met.* Θ.8, 1049b4–12.

72 See esp. Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.6, 1071b25–1072a4. Cf. Menn (2016), who argues that Aristotle implicitly permits a one-sided notion of possibility (δύνατον) for the unmoved mover, i.e. to act eternally in the way it does, rather than a two-sided notion, as in the case of the knower from *De Anima* 11.5 (see above).



second and third after ὑπαρξίς which is the first ontological category.<sup>73</sup> This allows for Proclus to account for the emergence of different levels of beings, like the production of Soul from Intellect, where there is otherwise a discontinuity in causal synonymy: in other words, Intellect is not Soul by actuality, but it is potentially Soul insofar as it contains the active δύναμις to produce it.<sup>74</sup> In this latter respect, ὑπαρξίς for Proclus plays a functionally similar role to the priority of ἐνέργεια for Aristotle, inasmuch as a thing's ὑπαρξίς may also pre-contain the power, and therefore actuality, to bring about its effect into actuality.<sup>75</sup>

Proclus' distinction of active δύναμις from passive δύναμις leads him to further claim that the cause not only contains, but *produces*, a δύναμις in the effect. We should consider Proclus' proof in detail:

*All that is participated separately is present to the participant through an inseparable power which it implants.*

For if it subsists separately from the participant and not in it, in the sense that it has acquired existence (ὑπόστασιν) in it, then they need a certain intermediary to connect one to the other, being more similar to the participated entity and yet in the participant itself. For if the former [*scil.* the participated] is separate, how can [the participant] participate that which contains neither it nor another entity from it? Therefore a power or irradiation (ἐλλαμψίς) proceeding from the participated to the participant must link both, and this will be that through which there is participation, [between] the participated and participant.

*ET Prop.* 81, 76,12–21

πᾶν τὸ χωριστῶς μετεχόμενον διὰ τινος ἀχωρίστου δυνάμεως, ἣν ἐνδίδωσι, τῷ μετέχοντι πάρεστιν.

73 See e.g. *In Tim.* 11 138,6–14. Proclus connects the three ontological terms with the principles of Being, Life and Intellect: Intellect's existence in actuality then depends on Being as its subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) and Life as its potentiality/power (δύναμις): cf. Chlup (2012) 94–95. See also Martijn and Gerson (2017) 55–57, esp. n. 59.

74 For instance, Intellect produces Soul, but its subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) differs from that of Soul; however Soul pre-subsists (προὑπάρχοντος) in Intellect, insofar as it is identical with its effect in the manner of a cause (κατ' αἰτίαν). See later *ET Prop.* 103. See also Gersh (1978) 33–36, esp. n. 45, on the inter-relation of potentiality and actuality, i.e. for causes on different levels that are either potentially [X] while actually [Y].

75 As we will see in the following Ch. 3, Damascius problematizes this specific issue: how can causes which are not actually- $X_1$  produce actually- $X_2$ ? As we have seen, Proclus modifies the Aristotelian model of causal synonymy to allow for cases like Intellect to produce Soul without Intellect *being* Soul in ὑπαρξίς. But if ὑπαρξίς functions like Aristotle's ἐνέργεια, then one faces a difficulty to explain how Intellect produces a distinct entity like Soul.



εἰ γὰρ αὐτὸ χωριστὸν ὑπάρχει τοῦ μετέχοντος καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἐκείνῳ, ὥς τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἐν ἑαυτῷ κεκτημένον, δεῖ δὴ τινος αὐτοῖς μεσότητος συνεχούσης θάτερον πρὸς θάτερον, ὁμοιοτέρας τῷ μετεχομένῳ καίτοι ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ μετέχοντι οὕσης. εἰ γὰρ ἐκείνο χωριστὸν ἔστι, πῶς τοῦτο μετέχει, μήτε αὐτὸ ἐκείνο ἔχον μήτε ἄλλο ἀπ' αὐτοῦ; δύναμις ἄρα ἀπ' ἐκείνου καὶ ἔλλαμψις εἰς τὸ μετέχον προελθοῦσα συνάψει ἄμφω· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἔσται δι' οὗ ἡ μέθεξις, τὸ δὲ μετεχόμενον, τὸ δὲ μετέχον.

Proclus adds an additional condition for causation: not only must the cause (1) be in actuality what the effect is potentially (as in Prop. 77), or (2) have an active δύναμις by which it brings to act (as in Prop. 79), but (3) it must implant (ἐνδίδωσι) an immanent power in the participant. Prop. 75 made it clear that true efficient causes necessitate ontological separation and transcendence over their effects, while here we find one consequence for positing such causes without also positing intermediaries like συναίτια. Prop. 81 thus gives us the reason for positing instrumental causes like the intermediate power which is implanted in the effect.

In Prop. 80, Proclus applies this principle to the case of body: in itself, body does not possess any capacity for action, or production, but only through participation in a bodiless entity—implicitly a particular soul or Nature—does it causally act.<sup>76</sup> Prop. 79's active δύναμις then becomes the middle term between the cause and the final effect which is brought to act: the body can only act in virtue of a bodiless entity—implicitly a separately-existing entity, like a soul—but that action can only happen in virtue of an active power immanent in the body (ὥστε οὐ καθὼς σῶμα ποιήσει, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ποιεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ

76 *ET* Prop. 80, 74,27–30: 'Every body by its own nature undergoes affection (πάσχειν), and every bodiless entity [by its own nature] produces: the former being in themselves inactive, and the latter impassible; but through communion toward the body, the bodiless entity too undergoes affection, just as bodies are also able to produce through participation of bodiless entities' (πάν σῶμα πάσχειν καθ' αὐτὸ πέφυκε, πᾶν δὲ ἀσώματον ποιεῖν, τὸ μὲν ἀδρανὲς ὄν καθ' αὐτό, τὸ δὲ ἀπαθὲς· πάσχει δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀσώματον διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα κοινωνίαν, ὥς δύνανται ποιεῖν καὶ τὰ σῶματα διὰ τὴν τῶν ἀσωμάτων μετουσίαν). See also Opsomer's elaboration of this phenomenon in (2009) 213: 'Everything which belongs to "that which becomes divisible around bodies" [citing *In Tim.* III.2, 152,10–11] is coextended (συνδυστάμενα) with body. Yet because of their incorporeal character these things are still forces and causes of motion. In this respect they differ from the bodies themselves, which are not able to impart motion. What we would describe as body A hitting body B and thereby dislodging B is conceptualised in a different way by Neoplatonists. Responsible for the motion of B is not A, but the incorporeal qualities of A. Cf. Barnes (1983) for a thorough, if somewhat tendentious, analysis of Prop. 80.

δύναμιν).<sup>77</sup> Aristotle's favorite example, '[particular] man causes man', thus still applies in virtue of each particular man possessing a participated incorporeal power (i.e. nature, or ultimately that particular man's soul) by which production happens.<sup>78</sup> In turn, Prop. 81 shows how this interaction works between the bodiless entity and the body: bodies receive an intermediate power *in virtue of which* the participated properties shared with the transcendent cause are brought about.<sup>79</sup>

We should note one additional, important characteristic of the intermediate power in Prop. 81: Proclus claims it is 'more similar (ὁμοιότερον) to the participated term and yet in the participant itself'<sup>80</sup>—while the participant remains dissimilar to the producer. Causal synonymy for Proclus then entails that what the cause immediately produces is like itself, although the final effect, that is the participant, remains distinct in kind from the producer (and implicitly the immanent power in it). One should then distinguish two kinds of 'effect' in relation to the producer: there is the power that is 'more similar' to the producer (the immediate effect), and the 'finished' effect (ἀποτελέσματα) which is the participant (the final effect). This marks a subtle but significant difference in causal synonymy from Aristotle, where the final effect becomes the same in kind with the producer, as 'man produces man'. For Proclus, the final effect that comes to be from a producer is distinct, as Soul is distinct from its producer, Intellect, while body is distinct from its producer, Soul (or Nature): thus for living body, it can only have the term, 'living', in virtue of the power that Soul implants in it—and it is this intermediate power that is synonymous with the cause.

We see this principle generally illustrated in *ET* Prop. 28, where Proclus claims in all cases, 'Every producer brings to existence entities similar to itself

<sup>77</sup> *ET* Prop. 80, 76,6–7.

<sup>78</sup> Given this, one needs to be cautious about translating *ποιεῖν* in *ET* Prop. 80: Dodds translates this as 'acts' (which is inconsistent with his previous translations of *ποιεῖν* as 'produces'), but it fails to capture the context of productivity that Proclus attaches to causes in the earlier propositions—we would expect Proclus to use *ἐνεργεῖν* or the like if he meant 'acts' simply. Here I believe Proclus has in mind cases like 'man produces man' from Aristotle, where he still supports this statement but only in virtue of participation of higher, true productive causes.

<sup>79</sup> One can see here the framework by which Proclus criticizes Aristotle's unmoved mover, based on the differences in approach to actuality: for Proclus, it is not enough to posit a cause that exists in complete actuality (*κατ' ἐνέργειαν*) next to the affected object, but the cause must implant an active power to bring about the effect in the object. See *In Parm.* 922,1–16. Cf. Steel (1987) 215–217, and earlier n. 54.

<sup>80</sup> *ET* Prop. 81, 76,16–17.

before dissimilar entities'.<sup>81</sup> The proposition first establishes, on the basis of Prop. 7, that such causes cannot produce what is the same as themselves, in particular if they are the first efficient causes of a different order of effects: the effect must, in some sense, be distinct. Yet the effect cannot be wholly distinct from the cause, if the effect participates in the cause and receives being (οὐσία) from it: for Proclus there must then be 'sympathy' (συμπαθές) between the cause and its effect, even while they are distinct from each other.<sup>82</sup> One of the outcomes of this is that a cause like the One cannot immediately produce the physical realm, much less the intelligible realm (*contra* Plotinus), but must instead produce entities similar to itself (e.g. particular 'ones', or henads—as we will see below)<sup>83</sup> before the derivation of lower levels (as Intellect produces Soul, and Soul in turn produces Nature and the material world).<sup>84</sup> In turn, this characterizes Proclus' claim in Prop. 81 that the immanent power in the participant must be more similar, i.e. 'united', to its separately-existing cause, while distinct insofar as it does not have a separate existence.

To return back to the issue of causal synonymy, we should consider how Proclus accounts for the derivation of different kinds of beings: if producers bring about entities that are only like themselves, how are dissimilar entities produced? As we have seen earlier, each cause must have an active power to bring about its effect. Proclus however does not limit this power to the production of immanent powers in each participant, which are the same (or similar) in kind, but also extends it to lower, secondary entities. In *ET* Prop. 56, Proclus establishes that, 'every entity that is produced from secondary entities is produced from prior and more causative (αἰτιωτέρων) entities, from which the secondary causes were also produced'.<sup>85</sup> Thus, A not only produces B, but

81 *ET* Prop. 28, 32,10–11: πᾶν τὸ παράγον τὰ ὅμοια πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πρὸ τῶν ἀνομοίων ὑφίστησιν. See Opsomer (2015)'s argument that πρὸ should be read as 'as opposed to'—i.e. the cause produces 'similars' *rather than* dis-similars.

82 *ET* Prop. 28, 32,17–21.

83 See below 4.1.3.

84 The antecedent for Proclus' proof can be found in Plotinus, *Enn.* 11.9.3, esp. 1–12, where Plotinus establishes that each principle (i.e. the One, Intellect, and Soul) must give a share of itself to its lower effects, connected with which he uses the example of fire and heat as communicating fire to other objects. In turn, this latter case demonstrates Plotinus' principle of 'double activity', where each producer is characterized by an internal and external activity: see *Enn.* 1.1.3, 7–17; cf. discussion in Emilsson (2017) 48 ff., O'Meara (1993) 63–66. See Syrianus, *In Met.* 109,34, where Proclus' version is stated; cf. Dodds' commentary in Proclus (1963) 216.

85 *ET* Prop. 56, 54,4–6: πᾶν τὸ ὑπὸ τῶν δευτέρων παραγόμενον καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν προτέρων καὶ αἰτιωτέρων παράγεται μειζόνως, ἅφ' ὧν καὶ τὰ δεύτερα παρήγγο. For a general discussion of this principle, cf. Chlup (2012) 83–86.

also C *through* (διὰ) B, since A pre-contains the power of B to produce C.<sup>86</sup> For the case of the One and Intellect, the One not only produces an entity like itself—for instance, the henads, or the principle, Being—but also dissimilar entities—for instance, Intellect: whereas Being directly produces Intellect, the One is ‘more causative’ of Intellect insofar as its power allows for the production both of Being-itself and the power of Being to produce Intellect.<sup>87</sup> Prop. 56 then warrants an understanding of causality where the cause’s power allows for a greater number of terms to come forth from the cause—thus A is able to produce C, D, and other subsequent entities, through the distribution of A’s power in B to produce C, D, and so on. Causes then produce *strictly* what are like themselves (Prop. 28): causal synonymy therefore applies only between A’s production of B. As we will later see in Ch. 4, this allows for Proclus to claim that the One produces ‘all things’ (as A causing B and C), including plurality, without also saying that the One is causally synonymous with plurality<sup>88</sup> (i.e. A as synonymous with C). This becomes a crucial factor when we soon look at the relation between the unparticipated and participants of the unparticipated’s essential character.

While causes pre-contain the powers to produce dissimilar entities, we still have yet to account for the mechanism by which these entities are brought to act. For instance, while Intellect has the power to produce Soul, how does Soul come to be *as* Soul after Intellect? Proclus accounts for the final stage between power from Intellect and the actuality of Soul through the concept of self-constitution: entities that do not exist in a substrate or another entity produce and define their own being.<sup>89</sup> For Proclus, self-constitution then

86 Cf. Opsomer (2015) 437.

87 For the sake of the example I refer to the One’s ‘power’, although strictly speaking the One does not internally have power (δύναμις), since this implies plurality—instead power manifests as a separate entity, as the Unlimited, below the One (see *ET* Prop. 92; discussed below, 4.4.1). So technically in this example a more correct example is the particular henad (i.e. the Limit) which produces Being, which is *in turn* more causative of Intellect. Since the henads are the participated counterparts of the One, the One by proxy would be causative in this sense.

88 As we will see in the next chapter and Ch. 4, this becomes a central issue for Damascius: if A produces B and C, shouldn’t A be causally synonymous with C, as well as B? That is, if the One produces ‘all things’—via an intermediary, like the henads, or in Damascius’ case, the Unified—why can’t the One be synonymous with ‘all things’, as Proclus would deny? This becomes the point of departure for Damascius’ causal framework in response to Proclus.

89 *ET* Prop. 40, 41. Cf. *In Tim.* 1, 232,11–18. For a discussion of self-constitution, see Chlup (2012) 70–73, Steel (2006), and Gersh (1973) 128–136. In a forthcoming work I plan to expand on Proclus’ metaphysics on self-constitution.

accounts for the emergence of different levels of being, or of different kinds of beings, insofar as entities like Soul have their identity within themselves and not in another.<sup>90</sup> While Intellect causes Soul, strictly speaking it only causes the power for Soul to produce itself *qua* Soul. In this sense, self-constitution explains the gap between causal synonymy and the production of dissimilar entities by higher causes.

### 2.1.3 *Productive Causes and Two Kinds of Intermediaries*

To recap, we have seen that productive causes for Proclus necessitate two distinctions: the primary cause itself, and an instrumental, secondary cause that mediates the effect between the primary cause and the participant. So far we have only seen the primary cause's active power (δύναμις) function as an instrument of the cause. Proclus generalizes the dynamic between primary and instrumental causes across a broader spectrum to include two kinds of mediate causes: in *ET* Prop. 64, Proclus claims that, 'Every monad that is a principle (ἀρχική μονάς) brings to existence a two-fold number [of entities]: one, that of self-complete existences (αὐτοτελῶν ὑποστάσεων), and second, that of irradiations (ἐλλάμψεων) that have acquired existence (ὑπόστασιν) in other things'.<sup>91</sup> This ultimately leads to the distinction between unparticipated and participated entities, which we will discuss below, but beforehand it is important to note the implicit two-fold intermediaries that each ἀρχική μονάς produces. With this last term Proclus indicates 'monads' or causes that are the first principles of a particular order of beings. Thus for the monad of Soul, as cause of life and self-motion, two intermediaries result in bringing about the effect in bodies: self-complete 'souls', and the immanent power of 'soul' in each participant body.<sup>92</sup> This time, each productive cause which is an ἀρχική μονάς is not only responsible for the immanent power (as in *ET* Prop. 81), but also 'self-complete existences' over the affected entities:

For if procession is according to descent (καθ' ὕφεσιν) through entities that are proper to constitutive causes (ὑποστατικοῖς αἰτίοις), both complete entities from entirely complete causes and incomplete entities through these intermediates proceed in a well-ordered way: so that there will be (1) self-complete existences (ὑποστάσεις), and (2) incomplete

<sup>90</sup> Cf. *ET* Prop. 41, 42,32–44,6.

<sup>91</sup> *ET* Prop. 64, 60,20–22: πᾶσα ἀρχική μονάς διιττὸν ὑφίστησιν ἀριθμόν, τὸν μὲν αὐτοτελῶν ὑποστάσεων, τὸν δὲ ἐλλάμψεων ἐν ἑτέροις τὴν ὑπόστασιν κεκτημένων.

<sup>92</sup> As with living bodies in *ET* Prop. 80.

existences. The latter (2) immediately belong to the participants (for being incomplete, they are in need of substrates (ὑποκειμένων) for their subsistence), while the former (1) make the participants belong to them (for being complete, they fill the participants with themselves and establish them in themselves, and they are not in need of inferior entities for their existence).

*ET Prop. 64, 60,23–31*

εἰ γὰρ καθ' ὕφεσιν ἢ πρόοδος διὰ τῶν οἰκείων τοῖς ὑποστατικοῖς αἰτίοις, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν παντελείων τὰ τέλεια καὶ διὰ τούτων μέσων τὰ ἀτελῆ πρόεισιν εὐτάκτως· ὥστε αἱ μὲν ἔσσονται αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις, αἱ δὲ ἀτελεῖς. καὶ αὗται μὲν γίνονται ἤδη τῶν μετεχόντων (ἀτελεῖς γὰρ οὔσαι δέονται τῶν ὑποκειμένων εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῶν ὑπαρξιν)· αἱ δὲ ἑαυτῶν ποιοῦσι τὰ μετέχοντα (τέλειαι γὰρ οὔσαι πληροῦσι μὲν ἑαυτῶν ἐκεῖνα καὶ ἐδράζουσιν ἐν ἑαυταῖς, δέονται δὲ οὐδὲν τῶν καταδεεστέρων εἰς τὴν ὑπόστασιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν).

In this case we can see Proclus' version of causal synonymy employed: self-complete entities (αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις) are like the ἀρχικὴ μονάς insofar as the latter is 'entirely complete'. Self-complete entities in turn fall short of their cause inasmuch as they exist as a plurality.<sup>93</sup> The latter in turn produce the 'irradiations' that are present in the participants, just like the immanent power produced in Prop. 81—'like' their immediate priors in kind or form, but unlike inasmuch as they subsist only in another entity. One should notice that Prop. 81 is focused on the relation between (1) and (2), whereas Prop. 64 generalizes this principle for both the 'monad' or cause of an order of beings—thus between the ἀρχικὴ μονάς (1), and also, by proxy, (2). In this sense, both self-complete entities and the 'irradiations' are employed as instrumental causes of the monad, although in different ways: first, self-complete entities (1), insofar as they exist separately to their effects, still function as primary causes, but only relative to their specific effect, whereas the 'irradiations' (2) are still

93 *ET Prop. 64, 60,31–62,4*: 'Self-complete existences (ὑποστάσεις), then, while they fall short of their originative monad through their differentiation into plurality, are made alike in a certain way to the monad through [each being a] self-complete subsistence. Incomplete entities, on the other hand, fall away from that which exists in itself, both by being in other entities and as incomplete from the entirely-completing monad. But entities which proceed are through similar entities as far as the entirely dissimilar'. (αἱ μὲν οὖν αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις, διὰ τὴν εἰς πλῆθος διάκρισιν ἡλαττωμέναι τῆς ἀρχικῆς αὐτῶν μονάδος, διὰ τὴν αὐτοτελῆ ὑπαρξιν ὁμοιοῦνται πῇ πρὸς ἐκείνην· αἱ δὲ ἀτελεῖς καὶ τῷ ἐν ἄλλοις εἶναι τῆς καθ' αὐτὴν ὑφεστῶσης καὶ τῷ ἀτελεῖ τῆς πάντα τελειούσης ἀφεστήκασιν. αἱ δὲ πρόοδοι διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων ἄκρι τῶν πάντη ἄνομοιων.)

dependent on coordination from their proximate cause, and in this sense they are absolutely instrumental causes.

What this ultimately shows is that Proclus conceives of the monad of each order as the primary cause of an effect produced at lower levels, so that even intermediaries of type (1) act as 'instruments' of the first cause or monad—even though they are complete in themselves. One must bear this in mind with the unparticipated and participated below, especially where Proclus conceives the former in the role of the ἀρχική μονάς. Furthermore these two senses of an intermediary also apply to two senses of being 'participated': either as a separate entity, or as an immanent power. However both kinds ultimately become instrumental causes for the unparticipated, either in an analogous sense (as for the self-subsisting entities) or literally.

## 2.2 Unparticipated and Participated Causes

In the previous section we saw how Proclus brings together a Platonic framework that distinguishes between αἰτία and συναίτια within an Aristotelian rubric of causal explanation according to ἐνέργεια and δύναμις. This leads Proclus to make a distinction between primary and instrumental efficient causes by which the final effect is brought about. Now we should see how Proclus carries this structure over to his general framework for participation, and in particular his distinction between unparticipated and participated causes. One problem we should consider is this: while it may make sense to speak of productive causes employing intermediate causes (as we found, two kinds of intermediate causes), what necessitates positing an *unparticipated* cause for participants in a given property? And why, if not how, is the unparticipated a productive cause if it has no direct causal relation with the participants?

We should first look in detail at Proclus' proof for the unparticipated and participated in *ET* Prop. 23:

*Every unparticipated principle brings to existence the unparticipated, and all participated existences (ὑποστάσεις) are raised upwards to unparticipated subsistences (ὑπάρξεις).*

[P1] For the unparticipated, which has the account of a monad—just as it belongs to itself and not to another, and just as it transcends the participants—generates out of itself entities that are able to be participated. For either it will be established as unproductive by itself, and it would then have no honor; or, it will give something from itself, and that



which receives participates, while what is given is brought to existence in a participated way.

[P<sub>2</sub>] Every participated entity, on the other hand—becoming that which belongs to a certain particular, by which it is participated—is secondary to that which is present in the same way to all and has filled all things from itself. For that which is in one is not in the others, while that which is present to all in the same way, in order that it may illuminate all, is not in one but before all things. For either it is in all, in one among all, or before all. But that which is in all would be divided into all, and again would require another principle to unify the divided; and further all would no longer participate the same principle, but this one and that another, through the unity being divided. And if it be in one out of all, it will no longer belong to all but to one. If then that which is both common belongs to those entities which are able to participate, and also that which is the same belongs to all, it will be prior to all: and this is the unparticipated.

*ET Prop. 23, 26,22–34*

πάν τὸ ἀμέθεκτον ὑφίστησιν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὰ μετεχόμενα, καὶ πάσαι αἱ μετεχόμεναι ὑποστάσεις εἰς ἀμεθέκτους ὑπάρξεις ἀνατείνονται.

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀμέθεκτον, μονάδος ἔχον λόγον ὡς ἑαυτοῦ ὄν καὶ οὐκ ἄλλου καὶ ὡς ἐξηρημένον τῶν μετεχόντων, ἀπογεννᾷ τὰ μετέχεσθαι δυνάμενα. ἡ γὰρ ἀγονὸν ἐστήξεται καθ' αὐτό, καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν ἔχοι τίμιον· ἢ δώσει τι ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ τὸ μὲν λαβὸν μετέσχε, τὸ δὲ δοθὲν ὑπέστη μετεχομένως.

τὸ δὲ μετεχόμενον πάν, τινὸς γενόμενον ὑφ' οὗ μετέχεται, δευτερόν ἐστι τοῦ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως παρόντος καὶ πάντα ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ πληρώσαντος. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ ὄν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐκ ἔστιν· τὸ δὲ πᾶσιν ὡσαύτως παρόν, ἵνα πᾶσιν ἐλλάμπῃ, οὐκ ἐν ἐνὶ ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ πρὸ τῶν πάντων. ἡ γὰρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἐστίν ἢ ἐν ἐνὶ τῶν πάντων ἢ πρὸ τῶν πάντων. ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἐν πᾶσιν ὄν, μερισθὲν εἰς πάντα, πάλιν ἄλλου ἂν δέοιτο τοῦ τὸ μερισθὲν ἐνίζοντος· καὶ οὐκέτ' ἂν τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετέχοι πάντα, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἄλλου, τὸ δὲ ἄλλου, τοῦ ἐνὸς μερισθέντος. εἰ δὲ ἐν ἐνὶ τῶν πάντων, οὐκέτι τῶν πάντων ἔσται, ἀλλ' ἐνός. εἰ οὖν καὶ κοινὸν τῶν μετέχειν δυναμένων καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πάντων, πρὸ τῶν πάντων ἔσται· τοῦτο δὲ ἀμέθεκτον.

Proclus' first argument in [P<sub>1</sub>] is effectively a restatement of the earlier Prop. 21 which proves that each order of a plurality of beings is coordinated and caused by a single principle or monad (ἀρχικὴ μονάς).<sup>94</sup> In this argument Proclus then

94 *ET Prop. 21, 24,1–3*: 'Every order which begins from a monad proceeds into plurality as coordinated with the monad, and the plurality of every order is led back to the one



redefines the terms from Prop. 21 with the unparticipated equated with the monad, while the secondary entities produced by the monad from Prop. 21 are associated with the entities 'given' by the unparticipated to the participants. The question in [P<sub>2</sub>] then becomes why and how the participants participate, not directly in one participated cause, but rather in a multitude of different participated entities. We see this in the first line of [P<sub>2</sub>], where the participated becomes 'that which belongs to a certain particular' (τινὸς γενόμενον): 'belonging' here can imply both senses of the intermediate cause from earlier—either as an immanent entity 'in' the participant, or as a separately-existing entity, like particular souls that are correlated with, but not immanently 'in', their participating body.<sup>95</sup> In this regard Proclus' argument is general and does not refer to only one sense of participation.<sup>96</sup> Even when Proclus speaks of the participated as either 'in all [or] in one among all' (ἢ γὰρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἐστὶν ἢ ἐν ἐνὶ τῶν πάντων), the term is used to indicate the coordination of the participated term with the participant.

If we look over to the next Prop. 24, Proclus argues that, 'every participant is inferior to the participated, and the participated is inferior to the unparticipated'.<sup>97</sup> In lines 28,11–12, we find that the participant must be inferior to the participated since the latter is 'that according to which the participant is complete' (καθὸ τέλειόν ἐστι μετασχόν). If we recall Prop. 64, one characteristic about intermediary (2), for the 'irradiation' from the monad, is that it is 'incomplete' (ἀτελής) in itself by contrast to intermediary (1), which is complete by itself (αὐτοτελής). Proclus' implicit reference in Prop. 24 to the participated as 'complete', or specifically that which 'makes complete' the participant, suggests intermediary (1) from Prop. 64, but it could also refer to intermediary (2) in conjunction with (1). The lack of specification then implies both these senses in Prop. 24 and 23.<sup>98</sup> Thus, Proclus is making a general point about both

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monad'. (πᾶσα τάξις ἀπὸ μονάδος ἀρχομένη πρόεισιν εἰς πλῆθος τῇ μονάδι σύστοιχον, καὶ πάσης τάξεως τὸ πλῆθος εἰς μίαν ἀνάγεται μονάδα.)

95 Cf. Meijer (1992a) 67, which makes the same distinction for μετεχόμενος in general. See also De Rijk (1992), esp. 26–29.

96 Even when Proclus refers to the participated as 'in' a participant, this is to indicate the participated's status as relative *only* to the participant—although he may be using cases of immanent participation to illustrate his point. For this reason Dodds' translation of the participated term as 'becoming a *property* of that particular ...' is misleading, since this only captures sense (2) from Sect. 2.1.3.

97 *ET* Prop. 24, 28,8–9: πᾶν τὸ μετέχον τοῦ μετεχομένου καταδεέστερον, καὶ τὸ μετεχόμενον τοῦ ἀμετέχτου.

98 For this reason Meijer (1992a)—as much as his distinction between μετεχόμενον (1) and (11) (standing in for my distinctions (2) and (1) respectively) proves right in this case—is surprisingly wrong to assume that *ET* Prop. 23 is only about μετεχόμενον (1), as he seems

kinds of participated entities: namely that they are relative to, and coordinated with, their participants.

### 2.2.1 *Participated Causes as Relative to Participants: Proclus' Shift from Plotinus*

Yet at this point Proclus' claim that 'that which is in all would be divided into all' is not immediately clear: why should a Form, like Beauty-itself which is participated by many 'beautiful' particulars, be divided if it is directly participated? For Plotinus, principles like Soul or the Forms are directly participated, however participation does not imply a 'splitting' of the Form or principle into many parts since the participants only 'mirror' the Form.<sup>99</sup> Thus the 'division' of the Form in the participants is only apparent, since there is no essential distinction between each participant in a given property—rather only the matter is divided while reflecting to various degrees the unity of the Form in which each particular participates.<sup>100</sup> This follows from Plotinus' emphasis that the intelligible world is everywhere present as a whole, and therefore beyond the whole/part division of the sail-cloth paradox in the *Parmenides*.<sup>101</sup>

Proclus, likely inheriting from Iamblichus' framework,<sup>102</sup> marks a departure from Plotinus' framework. He implicitly accepts the challenge of the *Parmenides*' sail-cloth metaphor by affirming that the immanence of the Form *within* the participants implies division. In other words, Proclus accepts that the Form's instantiation (or the effect of a principle, like Soul) changes in line with the properties of the participant. One sees this in Proclus' example of the

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to in 76 and 86–87. And further in 86–87, he says that there is an inconsistency in Proclus' framework with *ET* Prop. 81 (and 80, by proxy), where he assumes that the 'separately participated' (χωριστῶς μετεχόμενος) is correlated with (1). However, as has been earlier argued, the 'separately participated' clearly implies (11) (our (1)), while the immanent 'power' generated by the participated implies (1) (our (2)).

99 See e.g. Plotinus' analogy of images in mirrors to describe the appearances of being/forms in matter, in *Enn.* III.6.13, 46–55. For Plotinus' discussion on participation in Soul and the Forms, among other passages see *Enn.* VI.4–5. For an in-depth discussion on these passages, see Strange (1992); cf. D'Ancona Costa (1996) 359–360. In a forthcoming paper I plan to compare and discuss further Plotinus' and Proclus' notion of sensible substance and participation.

100 See Strange (1992) 494, where he calls the properties that matter acquires 'relations of participation', since matter does not receive, in itself, an intelligible form from the intelligible itself, like an Aristotelian immanent form.

101 Plato, *Parm.* 131a4–c11. For an overview of Plotinus' view of substance, see Chiaradonna (2014b) 220–225.

102 See Iamblichus, *In Tim.* Fr. 54 [= Proclus, *In Tim.* II, 240,4–23]; cf. Iamblichus (1973) 160–163.

form of fire and its particular instantiation as an immanent power in matter which manifests enmattered qualities:

Powers are (the qualities)<sup>103</sup> which hold together bodies and make them have form. For the form is one thing, while the power that derives from it is another. The form is partless and substantial (οὐσιώδεις), but once it has taken on extension and volume, it sends forth from itself the enmattered powers like an exhalation (πνοήν) and these are particular qualities. Take fire for example: the form of it and its substance are partless, since it is the real representation (ἄγαλμα) of the cause of fire (for there is something partless among the things which have parts).<sup>104</sup> But though it [proceeds] from the form in a partless way, in the fire there comes to be an extension and interval associated with the matter, from which the powers of fire have been projected (προβέβληνται), like heat, cooling, dampness, or some other thing such as this. These qualities are substantial, but they are by no means the essence (οὐσία) of fire. For essences do not come from qualities, neither are essence and power the same thing, but rather everywhere the substantial comes before the power. From the unity of the former proceeds a plurality of powers, and from the indivisible, divisible [powers].

*In Tim.* II, 25,5–19

δυνάμεις δὲ αἱ (ποιότητες αἱ) συνεκτικαὶ καὶ εἰδοποιοὶ τῶν σωμάτων. ἄλλο γὰρ τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἄλλη ἢ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ δύναμις· αὐτὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀμερές ἐστι καὶ οὐσιώδεις, ἐκταθὲν δὲ καὶ ὀγκωθὲν οἷον πνοήν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ προΐεται τὰς ἐνύλους δυνάμεις, ποιότητάς τινας οὐσας· οἷον ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρὸς τὸ μὲν εἶδος αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐσία ἀμερὴς ἐστι καὶ ὄντως ἄγαλμα τῆς αἰτίας τοῦ πυρός· ἔστι γάρ τι καὶ ἐν τοῖς μεριστοῖς ἀμερές· ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ εἶδους ἀμερῶς ὄντος ἐν τῷ πυρὶ διάστασις αὐτοῦ γίγνεται καὶ ἔκτασις περὶ τὴν ὕλην, ἀφ' ἧς αἱ δυνάμεις προβέβληνται τοῦ πυρός, οἷον θερμότης ἢ ψύξις ἢ ὑγρότης ἢ ἄλλη τις τοιαύτη, καὶ εἰσὶν αὗται ποιότητες μὲν οὐσιώδεις, οὐσία δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς οὐδαμῶς· οὐ γὰρ ἐκ ποιότητων αἱ οὐσῖαι οὐδὲ ταυτὸν οὐσία καὶ δύναμις, ἀλλὰ προηγείται πανταχοῦ τὸ οὐσιώδεις τῆς δυνάμεως, καὶ ἐξ ἐνός ἐκείνου πλῆθος πρόεισι δυνάμεων καὶ ἐξ ἀδιαίρετου διηρημένον.

103 According to Baltzly (Proclus (2008b) 71, n. 101), Diehl inserts this from the scholion to MS. M.

104 Baltzly misattributes this line to Aristotle, 'Met. 968a2': he must mean the pseudo-Aristotelian work, *On Indivisible Lines* 968a, which Diehls thinks Proclus is referencing. The same line occurs in *In Tim.* II, 153,8 and 194,26.

One should first note how the apparent, sensible effects of a given phenomenon, like fire, are directly related to the οὐσία of the quality in question: ‘fire’ in its essence is partless and substantially distinct from matter, but it produces its effect through an intermediate power<sup>105</sup> that comes to be in the material substrate.<sup>106</sup> The ‘power’ then attains properties that are proper to its participant: the form of fire attains the properties of extension and volume when immanent in body. If we compare this with Plotinus’ account of participation, the following differences arise. Sensible qualities in Plotinus’ account are *prior* to the substance (οὐσία) of a given sensible object (*as* sensible—not its intelligible paradigm), while there is no inherent connection between sensible and intelligible οὐσία.<sup>107</sup> As we saw above, for Plotinus the intelligible realm, as the Forms in Intellect, exists completely as a whole, so that there cannot be priority or posteriority for intelligibles—as would be implied if the intelligible also existed within sensible objects.<sup>108</sup> One can see an implicit corrective to Plotinus in lines 25,16–17, above, when Proclus says that ‘essences do not come from qualities’ but rather the other way around. Proclus tries to explain the direct derivation of sensible qualities from intelligible forms—both as enmattered, and as they exist transcendently in Intellect. In this respect Proclus, unlike Plotinus, accepts the derivation of intelligible substance within material substances, along the lines of an Aristotelian hylomorphism, while enmattered forms in themselves only find their full explanation by recourse to transcendent Forms.<sup>109</sup>

105 This implicitly correlates with our earlier sense (2) (earlier in 2.1.3), from *ET Prop.* 28.

106 Cf. Opsomer (2009) 212 on this passage and the general background: ‘Nature is the principle that emits ‘natural reason principles’ (φυσικοί λόγοι) and thereby unfolds itself. In bodies these principles are realised as enmattered forms. When they, in turn, unfold themselves they generate qualities. The enmattered form itself is undivided (ἀμερές) and is of an essential nature (οὐσιώδεις). By unfolding itself it becomes extended (ἐκταθέν) and takes on spatial dimensions (δγκωθέν). This amounts to its emitting enmattered powers (ἐνύλους δυνάμεις), which are ‘some kind of qualities’ (ποιότητάς), more precisely essential qualities. The presence of the ‘enmattered form’ in the body is to be understood as that of something undivided in something divided. This form takes on extension and thus becomes, i.e. generates, the essential qualities. These are not identical with the essence (the οὐσία, in this case the enmattered form), but are its powers (δυνάμεις).’

107 See Helmig (2006) 272, who notes Proclus’ implicit critique of Plotinus. See also Chiaradonna (2014b) 225–227, and n. 32.

108 See for instance Plotinus, *Enn.* VI.4.2, 1–6, 14–22.

109 See Chiaradonna (2014b) 227, n. 32, and for the general background on views of substance (οὐσία) after Plotinus see 225–227. Cf. the related discussion on this topic in Iamblichus in p. 57–59.

The greater significance of Proclus' shift from Plotinus is that it gives us one main motivation for why Forms as immanent in the participants should imply division—and further why participants participate only one, unique principle or form relative to themselves, rather than the primary Form itself. This framework applies not only to sensible substances, where matter is the principle of division,<sup>110</sup> but also to the higher levels of Soul and Intellect: for instance, each particular soul which possesses the property of intellection participates in a specific, participated intellect, rather than the unparticipated cause, Intellect.<sup>111</sup> In these cases, the principle of division is by species (εἶδος) rather than matter, as for enmattered forms or qualities like fire (above),<sup>112</sup> since entities like particular souls and intellects do not depend on a substrate but exist by themselves. Yet in either case, the principle which completes the participants necessitates 'giving' a distinct form or participated principle by which the participant receives its given property. In this respect, Proclus' position from *ET* Prop. 23 that the participants 'receive' something from the unparticipated accounts for the plurality of the participants and that participation implies an equal number of participated entities generated in relation to the participants of the unparticipated's characteristic property.

### 2.2.2 *Relating Unparticipated Causes with Participants*

Returning to *ET* Prop. 23, we have seen Proclus assign a productive causal role to the unparticipated as a monad (ἀρχική μονάς), particularly where it 'gives' or produces participated entities. What we should now consider is how the unparticipated is both productive and yet not coordinated with its participants: in particular, what makes it such that it is uncoordinated? And in what sense is it separate, for instance, compared to separately participated entities—like our sense (ἵ) from Prop. 64?

One first step is to recall Proclus' statement that the unparticipated is set apart from the participated insofar as it is 'present to all', while participated entities are present only to their respective participants. This distinction becomes significant for the kind of existence that the unparticipated has compared to the participated. We see this by comparison with participated entities, where

110 *In Tim.* 1, 446,24–26; see also Runia/Share's note in Proclus (2008a) 337, n. 224.

111 *ET* Prop. 182–183.

112 See above n. 110, and *In Parm.* 819,14–16: 'Yet every monadic [soul] is constituted by its characteristic reason-principle: for a soul does not differ from another by matter; it will then differ either by nothing, or according to its form'. (μοναδικὴ δὲ πάσα καὶ καθ' ἓνα λόγον ἴδιον ὑφέστηκεν· οὐ γὰρ (τῇ) ἕλλη διαφέρει ἄλλη ἄλλης, ἢ οὖν οὐδενὶ διοίσει τὸ παράπαν, ἢ [οὐ] κατ' εἶδος.)

their mode of existence is contextualized by the participant: each participated entity is either a particular (τι)—for instance, participated intellects—or differentiated as a kind—for instance, particular souls by εἶδος. We see this in *ET* Prop. 67, where Proclus defines the whole/part relation analogously according to his general three-fold participation schema:

For we perceive the form of each thing either (*W1*) in the cause, and we say that what pre-exists in the cause is that form as the whole-before-parts; or [we perceive the form] in the parts which participate in [the cause], and this in two ways: either (*W2*) in all the parts together, and this is the whole-of-parts (ἐκ τῶν μερῶν ὅλον),<sup>113</sup> from which the removal of a part then diminishes the whole; or (*W3*) in each of the parts, in the sense that even the part has become a whole by participation of the whole, which makes the part to be the whole in the manner of a part (μερικῶς). The whole-of-parts is then the whole by subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν); the whole-before-parts is the whole according to the cause (κατ' αἰτίαν); and the whole-in-the-part is the whole by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν). For the latter exists as a whole according to the last term insofar as it imitates the whole-of-parts—not whenever it happens to be *as* a part, but as it is able to be assimilated to a whole of which the parts are wholes.

*ET* Prop. 67, 64,3–14

ἢ γὰρ ἐν τῇ αἰτίᾳ τὸ ἐκάστου θεωροῦμεν εἶδος, καὶ ὅλον ἐκεῖνο πρὸ τῶν μερῶν λέγομεν τὸ ἐν τῷ αἰτίῳ προϋποστάν· ἢ ἐν τοῖς μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς μέρεσι. καὶ τοῦτο διχῶς· ἢ γὰρ ἐν ἅπασιν ὁμοῦ τοῖς μέρεσι, καὶ ἔστι τοῦτο ἐκ τῶν μερῶν ὅλον, οὗ καὶ ὅτιοῦν μέρος ἀπὸν ἔλαττοί τὸ ὅλον· ἢ ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν μερῶν, ὡς καὶ τοῦ μέρους κατὰ μέθεξιν τοῦ ὅλου (ὅλου) γεγονότος, ὃ καὶ ποιεῖ τὸ μέρος εἶναι ὅλον μερικῶς. καθ' ὑπαρξιν μὲν οὖν ὅλον τὸ ἐκ τῶν μερῶν· κατ' αἰτίαν δὲ τὸ πρὸ τῶν μερῶν· κατὰ μέθεξιν δὲ τὸ ἐν τῷ μέρει. καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο κατ' ἐσχάτην ὕφεσιν ὅλον, ἢ μιμνῆται τὸ ἐκ τῶν μερῶν ὅλον, ὅταν μὴ τὸ τυχὸν ἢ μέρος, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὅλῳ δυνάμενον ἀφομοιωθῆαι οὗ καὶ τὰ μέρη ὅλα ἐστίν.

One should note how Proclus starts the proposition with two distinctions: the whole as it exists *apart* from the whole-part relation (*W1*), and the whole as it is directly related to the parts—either derived from (ἐκ) the parts together (*W2*), or within each part (*W3*). (*W1*) is then distinct by not having any relation

113 Here I stick with Dodds' translation of 'whole-of-parts,' although factoring in a compositional reading of ἐκ, translated literally it would read, 'whole out of parts'.

to the parts, whereas each part has a specific relation within the whole: thus the whole-of-parts ( $W_2$ ) is directly related to all the parts together, while each part is individually coordinated through the 'whole' in it ( $W_3$ ). ( $W_2$ )'s correlation with ( $W_3$ ) mirrors the claim in Prop. 23 that each participated entity 'belongs to' its respective participant. One should also note Proclus' classification of ( $W_1$ ) as the form of wholeness 'in the cause', or by causality ( $\kappa\alpha\tau'$  αἰτίαν), compared to ( $W_2$ ) which is a whole 'by subsistence' ( $\kappa\alpha\theta'$  ὑπαρξιν), and in turn ( $W_3$ ) as 'by participation' ( $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$  μέθεξιν).<sup>114</sup> This a fundamental position for Proclus, from Prop. 65, that all things exist in these three ways: as he phrases it, we 'see' or 'contemplate' either the thing by itself ( $\kappa\alpha\theta'$  ὑπαρξιν) or otherwise in its cause ( $\kappa\alpha\tau'$  αἰτίαν) or by participation ( $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$  μέθεξιν).<sup>115</sup> This phrasing suggests that each entity exists, strictly speaking, only by its subsistence, while properties not related to a thing's subsistence can be 'seen' either implied in the effect's subsistence, or as potentially existing in the cause's subsistence. For instance, the property, 'being', exists in Intellect by participation, although Intellect's subsistence is not 'being' nor anything else but strictly Intellect-itself, while the property of 'intellect' exists in Being-itself as a cause, although the subsistence of Being in itself does not directly imply Intellect.<sup>116</sup> In the case of the whole-of-parts, the 'whole' by its subsistence necessarily implies the specific parts to which it belongs. Each 'whole' that exists by its subsistence cannot be representative of other wholes, even if they are essentially the same in kind, since they are specifically contextualized by the distinct grouping of parts they organize.

<sup>114</sup> Thus, the property [X] as it exists in its cause  $\kappa\alpha\tau'$  αἰτίαν implies that the cause's subsistence (ὑπαρξις) is something distinct from (and therefore greater than) the effect it pre-contains. See also *ET* Prop. 103, below (n. 116).

<sup>115</sup> Given the objective nature of the *Elements* as a *more geometrico* work, it is somewhat surprising that Proclus uses perceptive words, like 'we contemplate' (θεωροῦμεν) and 'is seen' (ὁράται), to describe the existence of attributes/subsistences in themselves or in their causes/effects. Proclus references ὁράται only once more, in *ET* Prop. 210, 184,2, while θεωροῦμεν only shows up in Prop. 65, 62,20, as well as Prop. 67 above.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *ET* Prop. 103, 92,13–16: 'All things are in all, but in each according to its proper nature: for in Being there is life (ἡ ζωὴ) and intellect (ὁ νοῦς); in Life, being (τὸ εἶναι) and intellection (τὸ νοεῖν); in Intellect, being (τὸ εἶναι) and living (τὸ ζῆν); but all beings exist in one way intellectually (νοερῶς), in another vitally (ζωτικῶς), and another substantively (ὄντως)'. (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, οἰκείως δὲ ἐν ἐκάστω· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ ὄντι καὶ ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ νοῦς, καὶ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ νοεῖν, καὶ ἐν τῷ νῷ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ζῆν, ἀλλ' ὅπου μὲν νοερῶς, ὅπου δὲ ζωτικῶς, ὅπου δὲ ὄντως ὄντα πάντα.) Note the interesting distinction between the use of infinitives (e.g. τὸ νοεῖν) and substantive nouns (e.g. ὁ νοῦς) that Proclus uses for the same kind of term pre-contained in other terms, depending on their priority/posteriority.



One sees this elaborated in Prop. 69, where Proclus provides another justification to distinguish the whole-before-parts ( $W_1$ ) from each whole ( $W_2$ ):

And since the whole of parts exists in many ways and in many things, it exists in certain things and in other things, belonging to [those] certain things [in one way], and belonging to [those] other things [in another way].<sup>117</sup> But the monad of all wholenesses should exist according to itself (*καθ' αὐτήν*). For each of these wholes is neither pure (*εἰλικρινές*), since it is in need of the parts from which it exists, [and] which [themselves] are not wholes; nor, since it has come to be in a particular [arrangement of parts], is [each whole] able to be the cause of being for all other wholes. Therefore the cause for all wholes of being for wholes is before the parts.

*ET* Prop. 69, 64,33–66,7

ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐκ τῶν μερῶν ὅλον πολλαχού καὶ ἐν πολλοῖς ἐστίν, ἐν ἄλλοις καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις ἐκ μερῶν οὖσι, τοῖς μὲν ἄλλων, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλων· δεῖ δὲ εἶναι τὴν μονάδα πασῶν τῶν ὁλοτήτων καθ' αὐτήν. οὔτε γὰρ εἰλικρινές ἕκαστον τῶν ὅλων τούτων, ἐπιδεές ὄν τῶν μερῶν ἐξ ὧν ἐστίν οὐχ ὅλων ὄντων· οὔτε ἐν τινὶ γεγονὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις ἄπασιν αἴτιον εἶναι δύναται τοῦ εἶναι ὅλοις. τὸ ἄρα τοῦ ὅλοις εἶναι τοῖς ὅλοις ἄπασιν αἴτιον πρὸ τῶν μερῶν ἐστίν.

In one way it is peculiar that Proclus does not consider the ‘whole-before-parts’ to exist as a ‘whole’ by subsistence, especially since the whole-before-parts is called the ‘absolute whole’ (*ἀπλῶς ὅλον*), while wholes which exist by subsistence—connecting with Prop. 67 above—are each a ‘particular whole’ (*τι ὅλον*). One might think that ‘whole’ is essentially the same in kind for these. Yet Proclus emphasizes that each instantiation of ‘wholeness’ is necessarily contextualized by the parts, as Proclus makes clear in the passage. While each subsistence (*ὑπαρξίς*) of ‘wholeness’ is then the same in its kind, it can only derive the unity of its character, alongside other wholes, from a source which is not dependent on the arrangement of parts, with the ‘absolute whole’ or whole-before-parts. Thus the subsistence (*ὑπαρξίς*) of the whole-before-parts ( $W_1$ ) must be distinct from that of each particular whole-of-parts ( $W_2$ ): in this sense, the ‘whole’ belonging to each collection of parts exists in ( $W_1$ ) as a cause.

One conclusion we may then draw from this for unparticipated and participated entities from Prop. 23 is that each participated entity exists by

<sup>117</sup> One may notice the contrast between ‘being in’ and ‘belonging to’ in the text, which perhaps correlates respectively to ( $W_3$ ) and ( $W_2$ ).



subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν) in relation to its participant, while each is yet ontologically contextualized by its respective participant: one given participated entity cannot be exchanged for another with a given participant. We should also keep in mind a crucial difference: in Prop. 23, Proclus only speaks of each participated entity 'belonging to' its participant—without specifying either the entity's immanent or separate existence (as we will discuss shortly)—while the 'whole-of-parts' in Prop. 67 and 69 only implies immanent existence. However, Proclus' argument about each 'particular whole' (τι ὅλον) also applies to separately-existing participated entities, like particular souls: they are still coordinated with the specific effect they produce, which implies that each is correlated with its respective participant, although not dependent in the way immanent forms or wholes-of-parts are for their participants. In this respect, Proclus' argument for wholes and parts forms an analogous case study for the relation between unparticipated and participated entities.

Proclus' argument for the whole-before-parts and the unparticipated matches his description of the monad compared to the members of its order in *ET* Prop. 21: insofar as the members derive their common character from a single source, the monad is responsible for the character as the unity represented across the distinct particular members of that order.<sup>118</sup> The members of the order are then co-ordinated with the monad according to the order's single character: each particular soul, for instance, is of the same order or kind as being souls, and their coordination of the same kind goes back to the single monad, Soul-itself. Two kinds of co-ordination can then be picked out: the unparticipated, as the first monad (ἀρχική μονάς) of a given order, is the principle of coordination for participated entities according to the same kind or character that they possess; in turn, participated entities are coordinated with their participants in terms of the distinction entailed by each participant separately. The first monad of a given order is then unparticipated, *not* because its character is not shared by other participants, but because as a principle it is un-coordinated in relation to the participants.

An example would be the relation between unparticipated Intellect and particular intellects for Proclus: whereas unparticipated Intellect knows all things simply (ἀπλῶς), each particular, participated intellect knows all things 'according to one aspect' (καθ' ἓν).<sup>119</sup> As sharing the same nature and character,

<sup>118</sup> *ET* Prop. 21, 24,15–21.

<sup>119</sup> *ET* Prop. 170, 148,4–5: 'Every intellect thinks all things at once, but the unparticipated thinks all things simply, while each of the other intellects after [the unparticipated] think all things according to one aspect'. (πᾶς νοῦς πάντα ἅμα νοεῖ· ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν ἀμέθεκτος ἀπλῶς πάντα, τῶν δὲ μετ' ἐκείνων ἕκαστος καθ' ἓν πάντα.)

each intellect thinks the same content as unparticipated Intellect-itself, but the way in which each thinks or understands the content is ‘characterized’ (χαρακτηρίζοντος) for that specific intellect, and its content is ‘delimited’ (ὀρίζουσης) or focused by that aspect. In one way this ‘aspect’ is determined by the respective participants of each intellect, insofar as the unparticipated principle ‘gives’ to the participants by producing the participated entities that correlate with their specific participant. Unlike the whole-of-parts, as was mentioned, each intellect exists as a separate, self-complete principle which does not depend on its participant (i.e. a participating soul)<sup>120</sup> for its existence.<sup>121</sup> On the other hand, for the *kind* of effect brought about, each intellect anticipates the specific manifestation of the character produced in each soul, by which each is related only to its specific participant and no other.<sup>122</sup> In this way each intellect is coordinated with the unique character of its participant—like the whole-of-parts, above, as existing ‘by subsistence’ (καθ’ ὑπαρξιν)—while Intellect-itself, as unparticipated, is uncoordinated and yet implies each particular instantiated intellect as a cause (κατ’ αἰτίαν).

Already we can see the basic framework for the One as uncoordinated with its participants, as unparticipated, and the entities it generates, the henads, which are directly participated. The details of this we will, of course, discuss below in Chapter 4, but for now we may note a further application of the distinction between κατ’ αἰτίαν and καθ’ ὑπαρξιν that Proclus applies to the One and the henads, respectively, in his *Ten Problems Concerning Providence*. There Proclus settles the question of how lower entities below the One and the gods, like angels, demons, and heroic souls, can exercise providence in the physical world if only pure divinities, as the One and the gods, truly have that power. Proclus’ response depends on showing how the property of providence can be passed down different levels, via participation. It is in this context that he specifies the nature of existence for the One and the gods, as henads:

For the One and the Good are threefold: either according to cause (κατ’ αἰτίαν), as in the case of the First: for that is the Good and the One-itself (αὐτότεν) as cause of all that is good and of all the henads; or according to subsistence (καθ’ ὑπαρξιν), as in the case of every single god, which is one and good; or through participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν), as in the case of the one and good in substances (οὐσίαις)—through this each substance is

120 *ET Prop.* 166, 193.

121 Cf. *ET Prop.* 24, esp. 28,10–13.

122 In this respect, the ‘whole-of-parts’ (*W*<sub>2</sub>), insofar as participating parts contextualize each case of (*W*<sub>2</sub>), is still applicable.

unified and has the form of good (ἀγαθοειδής). Every god, then, if indeed it is a henad, is rather a henad complete in itself, not being of another, but of itself; but every intellect and soul, that participates in a certain 'one' (for it is a certain one, of which a soul participates and of which an intellect participates), as the form of unity.

*De Decem Dub.* 63,5–12;<sup>123</sup> trans. Opsomer/Steel, modified

(τριχῶς γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἢ κατ' αἰτίαν, οἷον τὸ πρῶτον· καὶ γὰρ τὰγαθὸν ἐκεῖνο καὶ αὐτοὲν ὡς αἴτιον καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν πάντων καὶ τῶν ἐνάδων· ἢ καθ' ὑπαρξιν, οἷον ἕκαστος θεός, ἐν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ὑπάρχων· ἢ κατὰ μέθεξιν, οἷον τὸ ἐν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐν καὶ ἀγαθόν, δι' ἃ καὶ ἡγνῶται πᾶσα οὐσία καὶ ἀγαθοειδής ἐστι), πᾶς θεός, εἰ καὶ ἐνός ἐστιν, ἀλλ' αὐτοτελὴς ἐνός ἐστιν, οὐκ ἄλλου ὢν, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῦ, πᾶς δὲ νοῦς καὶ ψυχὴ πᾶσα, μετέχουσα τινος ἐνός (τὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐστιν, οὗ ἢ ψυχὴ μετέχει καὶ οὗ μετέχει ὁ νοῦς), ἐνοειδής ἐστιν.

In one way this passage suggests that the One is not truly 'one', properly speaking, since the henads are what is 'one' by subsistence (ὑπαρξίς), which, one could think, implies that the 'One' is different in its own subsistence, or even ineffable.<sup>124</sup> In one way this is correct, although not correct in the sense that there is *no* principle distinct from the instantiation of unity with the henads themselves.<sup>125</sup> Rather we see the same dynamic applied for the One as in the case of the whole-before-parts and Intellect-itself: each monad, like 'wholeness-itself', and 'Intellect-itself', is the character it produces by its causality (κατ' αἰτίαν), and is named from the property. So the same thing can be said for the One here, as Proclus even calls it the 'One-itself' (αὐτοὲν), although it is only 'one' κατ' αἰτίαν.

### 2.3 The Derivation of Participated Entities and Lower Levels from the Unparticipated

We should finally note two kinds of production that apply to the unparticipated monad deriving the participated entities, and in turn the production of the

<sup>123</sup> Here I follow Opsomer/Steel's translation from Strobel's Greek retroversion from the extant Latin translation and remaining Greek fragments of the *Tria Opuscula*, while I quote Strobel's retroversion. Cf. Opsomer/Steel's introduction in Proclus (2012) 60–61.

<sup>124</sup> As Proclus makes explicit in passages like *PT* 111.8, 32,8–15, while he makes the Limit to be the 'One' relative to us. Discussed further below in Ch. 4.

<sup>125</sup> As is Edward Butler's position: see e.g. Butler (2008a) 98, 101–103, and Butler (2005) 83–84, 97–98. I discuss Butler's position in some more detail in Greig (2020) 38–43.

participants which differ in kind from the order they participate. As it turns out, true ‘production’ does not apply to the unparticipated’s derivation of participated entities, but instead to the generation of the next level of being, as Soul from Intellect:

It is necessary to remember that all the monads of whatever things are said to be bring about certain entities (*a*) as more particular (μερικώτε-ρα), from the entirety of themselves by diminution, since their particular character (ιδιότης) remains, but becomes more particular in them alone; while other entities they bring about (*b*) according to an utter change of substance (κατ’ οὐσίας ἐξαλλαγὴν), as with the generation of the procession of images (εἰκόνων) from paradigms. For all images which are utterly changed according to their essence wish to belong to their proper paradigms, and no longer have the same account, but one similar to those paradigms from which they proceeded.<sup>126</sup> In this way, then, the whole Intellect brings to existence more particular intellects (*a*) by diminution, while [it brings to existence] souls (*b*) by procession (κατὰ πρόοδον)—the former (*a*) as more particular entities from itself as a whole, while the latter (*b*) as images from itself as a paradigm.

*In Parm.* 745,28–746,9

δεῖ δὲ μεμνήσθαι κάκεινων, ὅτι πάσαι τῶν ὁπωσοῦν εἶναι λεγομένων αἱ μονάδες τὰ μὲν παράγουσιν ὡς ἀπὸ ὀλικῶν ἑαυτῶν καθ’ ὑπόβασιν μερικώτερα, τῆς ιδιότητος τῆς αὐτῆς μενούσης, μερικωτέρας δὲ μόνον γιγνομένης· τὰ δὲ κατ’ οὐσίας ἐξαλλαγὴν, ὡς ἀπὸ παραδειγμάτων εἰκόνων γίγνεσθαι προόδους· πάσαι γὰρ εἰκόνες ἐξηλλαγμένοι κατ’ οὐσίαν βούλονται εἶναι τῶν οἰκείων παραδειγμάτων, καὶ μηκέτι τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ τὸν ὅμοιον τοῖς ἀφ’ ὧν προήλθον. οὕτω δὴ οὖν ὁ μὲν ὅλος νοῦς ὑφίστησι τοὺς μερικοὺς νοῦς καθ’ ὑπόβασιν, τὰς δὲ ψυχὰς κατὰ πρόοδον, τοὺς μὲν ἐξ ὅλου ἑαυτοῦ μερικοὺς, τὰς δὲ ἐκ παραδείγματος ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνας.

Proclus establishes two kinds of production, where the effect comes to be from the cause either (1) by ‘diminution’ (καθ’ ὑπόβασιν), or (2) by alteration in substance (κατ’ οὐσίας ἐξαλλαγὴν). Proclus’ identification of (1) with particular intellects from Intellect-itself implies that participated entities, in general, are differentiated from the unparticipated by ‘diminution’, while the second type (2) correlates to lower levels produced after the participated—which we

<sup>126</sup> Compare with *ET Prop.* 28, where similarity (ὁμοιότης) is the principle of all production.

will address shortly. Proclus' first distinction, 'by diminution', then clarifies the relation we saw earlier between Intellect-itself and particular, participated intellects: both retain the same nature and character, as well as the content they think. One may also note Proclus' word-choice, ὑπόβασις, indicating going 'downward' as through a series of terms. In this respect the word used in translation, 'diminution', can be misleading, since it could imply a lessening of power or nature, for instance, which is not what Proclus maintains here. Instead this sense would be implied for Proclus' second kind of production (2), from paradigm to image, where there is such a 'lowering' in power. One sees this in *Platonic Theology* III.9, where Proclus interprets the *Philebus*' use of the word, 'manifestation' (ἐκφανσις), for God 'revealing' the principles of the Limit and Unlimited. In the passage Proclus says that 'manifestation' is superior to both 'making' (ποιεῖν), in relation to ἐκφανεῖν, and 'generation' (γένεσις), in relation to ἐκφανσις. The distinction is in the context of God's 'manifesting' the Limit and Unlimited compared to God's 'mixture' of the two, which is correlated to 'making' and 'generation'.<sup>127</sup> Proclus ultimately connects procession (πρόοδος) with the Mixed coming from the One, compared to the 'manifestation' of the Limit and Unlimited, which would be analogous to the first kind of production, above, with 'diminution' (καθ' ὑπόβασιν).

Ultimately this suggests that production by type (1), from the *Parmenides Commentary* passage above, for the unparticipated and participated entities implies a 'thin' distinction: that is to say, each participated entity is produced by a 'more particular aspect' (μερικώτερον), for participated beings (ὄντα) like intellects, or is simply a 'manifestation' that implies distinction without diminution in power or nature, as for the Limit and Unlimited under the One. Even for the former kind, 'diminution' does not imply inferiority, as with type (2), but a limiting and focusing in the range of causality, as we have seen with each particular intellect. As we will later see in the case of the One and the henads, although Proclus does not address them in the passage above, he analogously applies (1) to them—even though, strictly speaking, there is *no* limitation implied in the henads' existence or activity, as is the case for particular intellects,

<sup>127</sup> *PT* III.9, 36,15–19. For further discussion, see below p. 211–213. Admittedly this context is more tricky compared to the passage, above, since production as kind (1) is 'more particular' (μερικώτερον), but Proclus does not indicate that in *PT* III.9. As we will see, Proclus would describe the relation between the henads and the One as entirely 'all in all', without 'diminution' or any 'downward' relation. But then, as I will also argue, Proclus still sees an analogy between kind (1), for beings, and the 'manifestation' (ἐκφανσις) of the henads from the One.

but the henads are still delimited in terms of their causal range—in other words, their specific participants.<sup>128</sup>

Finally for production by procession (2), while Proclus mentions that it is as an image (εἰκῶν) coming forth from a paradigm (παράδειγμα), or a ‘change’ (ἐξαλλαγή) of substance, it is not clear in our passage how the monad directly causes this. If Intellect produces Soul, and by proxy all particular/participated souls, how does Soul come about? As was mentioned earlier, Proclus endorses a second form of causality, alongside unparticipated/participated causes, with self-constitution: each entity that has its existence in itself, rather than in another, is self-constituted (αὐθυπόστατον). In this sense, both particular intellects and souls, as well as their unparticipated causes, constitute their own being, although in different ways. Participated entities would then be self-constituted only insofar as they are particularized in relation to their common source: that is, each particular intellect constitutes itself as its own, distinct aspect of Intellect-itself, while each particular intellect receives its common nature from the unparticipated, Intellect-itself. The unparticipated in turn, however, is in itself fully self-constituted—that is, Intellect, for instance, does not receive its being, as ‘intellect’, from any other entity than itself:

*Every unparticipated entity, as unparticipated, is not by this brought to existence from another cause, but it is itself the first principle (ἀρχή) and cause of all participated entities. And in this way every principle according to each series is ungenerated.*

For if it is unparticipated, in its own series it acquires primacy and does not proceed from other entities: if it received from another particular source its unique character (ιδιότητα) as that by which it is unparticipated, it would no longer be the first entity. Yet if it is more inferior to other entities and proceeds from those, it is not as unparticipated that it proceeds by this, but as a participant. For those principles from which it has been set in motion, doubtless it participates in these, and those things which it participates, it is not these primarily. But that which exists in an unparticipated way, it is this primarily. Therefore it is not *as* unparticipated that it is from a cause. For as from a cause it is a participant and not unparticipated; but as unparticipated, it is a cause of participated entities, but not itself a participant of others.

ET Prop. 99, 88,20–33

<sup>128</sup> Discussed further below in 4.3.2.

πάν ἀμέθεκτον, ἢ ἀμέθεκτόν ἐστι, ταύτη ἀπ' ἄλλης αἰτίας οὐχ ὑφίσταται, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ ἀρχὴ ἐστὶ καὶ αἰτία τῶν μετεχομένων πάντων· καὶ οὕτως ἀρχὴ πᾶσα καθ' ἐκάστην σειρὰν ἀγέννητος.

εἰ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀμέθεκτον, ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ σειρᾷ τὸ πρωτεῖον ἔλαχε, καὶ οὐ πρό-  
εῖσιν ἀπ' ἄλλων· οὐ γὰρ ἂν εἴη πρῶτον ἔτι, τὴν ιδιότητα ταύτην, καθ' ἣν ἐστὶν  
ἀμέθεκτον, παρ' ἄλλου τινὸς ὑποδεχόμενον. εἰ δὲ ἄλλων ἐστὶ καταδεέστερον  
καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνων πρόεῖσιν, οὐχ ἢ ἀμέθεκτόν ἐστι, ταύτη πρόεῖσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ μετέχον.  
ἀφ' ὧν γὰρ ὥρμηται, τούτων δήπου μετέχει, καὶ ὧν μετέχει, ταῦτα οὐκ ἐστὶ  
πρώτως· ὁ δὲ ἀμεθέκτως ἐστὶ, τοῦτο πρώτως ἐστίν· οὐκ ἄρα ἢ ἀμέθεκτον, ταύ-  
τη ἀπ' αἰτίας ἐστίν. ἢ μὲν γὰρ ἀπ' αἰτίας, μετέχον ἐστὶ καὶ οὐκ ἀμέθεκτον· ἢ δὲ  
ἀμέθεκτον, μετεχομένων αἴτιον, ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτὸ μετέχον ἄλλων.

We should note the contrast to the previous passage (*In Parm.* 745–746), where Proclus implies that the cause of Soul is Intellect. In one sense this is still correct, but only inasmuch as being 'soul' implies dependence on a higher property, 'intellection' within itself, and in this regard depends on the higher cause of Intellect. When construed in terms of unparticipated and participated, then a distinction needs to be made: as the cause of a series of particular souls, Soul-itself, as unparticipated, does not come from any other source—even Intellect—than itself, strictly *as* that character. Unparticipated Soul then constitutes its own being, or character, as the kind, 'soul', and as the first principle of all particular souls. But insofar as it depends on Intellect, and participates the character, 'intellect', Soul is derived from that source. This would then contextualize Proclus' claim, above, about the 'procession' of Soul (and souls) from Intellect: Intellect, considered as unparticipated, would then produce its participated character, while Soul constitutes itself on the basis of that produced character.<sup>129</sup> The final lines of Prop. 99 bear this out, where the unparticipated is the cause of participated entities (μετεχομένων αἴτιον), but not of the participants in themselves.

One can see that Proclus attempts to maintain a clear balance of continuity and separation between each level. The unparticipated produces participated entities, which still maintain their common character with the cause. Each new level comes to be through the produced, participated entity or character becoming the basis for that new, lower level's unparticipated cause to constitute itself.<sup>130</sup> In this sense, Intellect is only secondarily a 'cause' of Soul-itself,

129 Cf. *ET* Prop. 112: 'Among every order, the very first entities have the form of the principles before them' (98,33–34). (πάσης τάξεως τὰ πρῶτα μορφήν ἔχει τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν.)

130 On this causal description, cf. Damascius, *DP* III, 101,21–102,1. Discussed in more detail below in 3.3.2.



since only Soul causes itself, strictly speaking. Intellect is related to Soul as a cause (κατ' αἰτίαν) only in the sense that it produces the participated out of which Soul comes to be. Unparticipated causes like Intellect then remain unaffected in themselves, yet it is exactly their position as unaffected and in remaining transcendent that allows them to be causes for the lower levels to emerge—as Soul from Intellect.

## 2.4 Conclusion

From what we have seen, unparticipated and participated causality for Proclus is predicated on two points. First it is an adaptation of both Platonic and Aristotelian positions on causes, where Proclus uses Aristotle's framework, and its development through Alexander, ultimately to support his view for higher causes, like Soul and particular souls, producing their effect through intermediate causes. Proclus' distinction between primary and instrumental causes leads to the second point: that participation necessitates a similar distinction, between the unparticipated and participated. Proclus' stance is justified by his view that what participants directly participate is relative to each respectively: there is no one common Form or principle that all the participants directly participate. This view is partly motivated by Proclus' shift away from Plotinus on the way sensibles participate Forms: whereas Plotinus separates the intelligible from the sensible, Proclus allows for enmattered, intelligible forms which are derived from intelligible Forms which exist in themselves. Proclus in turn sees all higher participants reflecting this basic structure—as souls which possess the property of intellection by participating in a particular intellect, *not* Intellect-itself. This ultimately leaves the unparticipated as the cause of properties found in the participants, yet without being implicated by the participants that they act on. In this way, Proclus balances transcendence and causality in unparticipated causes by making the character which is produced in other entities non-relational. This ultimately achieves the same thing that Plotinus and earlier Platonists attempt with Forms and the One, but with the gap emphasized between the transcendent principle itself, and the participants which receive only properties or participated entities relative to themselves.

As we will see in the next chapter, Damascius raises an issue with this separation between two senses of 'cause' for lower levels: if, for example, Intellect is a cause of Soul, even if secondarily, should not Intellect become exactly like the final effect that it produces? In other words, should not Intellect causally anticipate Soul in its discursive, divided nature? Damascius' critique, we will

next see, raises an implicit tension in Proclus' causal framework: on the one hand, it preserves the transcendence of each level—Intellect-itself only produces participated intellects, while the next level is responsible for generating itself. On the other hand, one wonders about the gap between the produced, participated entity and the next step of Soul, for instance, constituting itself. This issue becomes the focus of Damascius' *aporia*, and the basis for his revision of Proclus' framework.

## Damascius' Causal Framework

As we saw in the previous chapter, Proclus' conception of unparticipated causes allows for one to maintain the One as transcendent and beyond causality, in one sense, and as remaining the first cause of all things.<sup>1</sup> Proclus is able to explain this dual role by combining two essential features: first, true, separately-existing causes produce their effects via intermediate entities, which in turn bring about their final effect; and second, causal synonymy, strictly speaking, obtains between the cause and the intermediary—or rather, between the unparticipated and the participated. A is then causative of B, since A produces  $A_1$  which in turn produces B. This allows one to say that A is a cause of B while it *also* transcends B, since A is not synonymous with B *qua* B—rather A is only synonymous with  $A_1$ .

On turning to Damascius, just as we saw in Proclus, Damascius' causal framework factors significantly into the reason why he splits Proclus' One into two principles: the Ineffable as purely transcendent, and the One as the first cause. As we will later see, one factor behind this split is Damascius' view that the One is causally synonymous with its final effect, all things (τὰ πάντα)—in fact he emphasizes that the One *is* all things, while numerically distinct from all things as their cause. For Damascius, A is causative of B, not only because it produces  $A_1$  which produces B, but also because A is causally synonymous with B. Framed this way, one may wonder if there is indeed *any* difference in kind between A and B. For instance, the effect, 'all things', as produced from the One is not 'one' in the same way as the One-itself, so there is still a difference in kind between the One and 'all things', which Damascius affirms.<sup>2</sup> We should also put this together with passages where Damascius appears to agree with Proclus by denying any direct relation between the One and 'all things'. In this respect Damascius raises a difficulty about causality between different levels, up to the One and 'all things': on the one hand, productive causes transcend their effects, yet if they produce intermediate entities that in turn produce their effects, should not those same causes contain or anticipate the final effect? In other words, if the power of the One's unity makes possible the production of

1 Throughout this chapter, all primary source citations refer to Damascius unless otherwise specified.

2 E.g. *DP* I, 3,11–12. Discussed further below in 5.1.

all things, why does the One not pre-contain 'all things' simply? Once again this brings us back full circle to the problems raised in Proclus' predecessors, as seen in Chapter 1, where the One pre-contains the effect it produces as the first cause—whether it is Intellect in Plotinus or the intelligible triad in Iamblichus that implies plurality. In one sense Damascius accepts the position Proclus' predecessors start from, whereby the One must anticipate the effect it brings about, yet he also affirms Proclus' view that causes, by their subsistence, finally transcend their effects.

As we will see, Damascius combines both of these intuitions: on the one hand, causes must be distinguished between (C<sub>1</sub>) their internal subsistence, according to which they do *not* have a causal relation with the effect, and (C<sub>2</sub>), the internal aspect or 'part' of themselves according to which they are potentially the effect that they cause. An example of this, which we will examine below in Section 3.2, is the causal relation between Being and Intellect: as simple and unified in its subsistence, Being has no connection to Intellect, which exists in differentiation. However if causal synonymy obtains between cause and effect, what produces Intellect must itself be differentiated like Intellect. Damascius' solution is then to describe the cause 'conforming' itself in the causal process: thus Being makes itself, as it were, similar to Intellect, as differentiated and anticipating Intellect's nature. Thus (C<sub>1</sub>) and (C<sub>2</sub>) do not simply indicate separate aspects of the cause, but rather a transition between the cause 'before' the causal process happens and 'after', or during, the causal process. From the level of Intellect, one can only indicate Being as a cause at the stage of (C<sub>2</sub>), while beforehand, at stage (C<sub>1</sub>) Being has no causal relation to Intellect. Damascius thus deals with the *aporia* of causal synonymy and transcendence by separating these two into separate aspects, while at the same time relating one with the other: (C<sub>1</sub>) ultimately grounds the causal relation that obtains between cause and effect at stage (C<sub>2</sub>). This forms a crucial backdrop to understanding the relation between Damascius' One and the Ineffable, where the Ineffable grounds the One's causal synonymy with all things: in itself the Ineffable has no causal relation to 'all things' (unlike Proclus' One), but in the causal process the One becomes causally synonymous with its final effect, 'all things'. Just as in Proclus, the causal framework becomes important to see why Damascius makes this move.

Given this, in the first two sections (3.1–3.2) we will analyze Damascius' reasons to distinguish between two stages for causes, and in the third section (3.3) we will consider the consequences for the causal notions of unparticipated/participated causality and self-constitution from Proclus, which Damascius continues to employ in his structure of principles but crucially modifies in light of his revision on the nature of productive causes.

### 3.1 Synonymy in Causal Relations

We find Damascius' discussion about causality developed within a broader investigation into the relation between the principles of Being, Life, and Intellect, just as in Proclus' framework. For both figures, Being functions as the primary cause of Intellect, inasmuch as it causes both being and intelligibility in Intellect. This marks a contrast to Plotinus, who emphasizes the unity of the subject and object of thought in Intellect, which leads him to make a numerical identification of Being with Intellect.<sup>3</sup> While agreeing with Plotinus that Intellect is identical with its object of thought, Proclus separates Being as a numerically distinct principle from Intellect, so that Being is merely intelligible rather than intellective in the way Intellect is.<sup>4</sup> Intellect then indirectly thinks its source, Being, insofar as Being produces its own characteristic property (τὸ ὄν) and intelligibility within Intellect. Given this context, an implicit tension in Proclus' model is that Being is supposed to be the main object of thought for Intellect, yet its separation from Intellect suggests that it is not immanently relatable as an object of thought—even when Proclus affirms that Being is intelligible *while* it is also transcendent.<sup>5</sup>

Damascius emphasizes this tension as he raises a series of difficulties about the relation between Being and Intellect, and it is in this aporetic context that we find Damascius' view on causality developed. In *De Principiis* 11, 156–158, Damascius asks whether the effect acts reciprocally on the cause just as the cause brings about the effect, given that the subject and object of knowledge are defined by a relation that implies each other.<sup>6</sup> Damascius elaborates this problem accordingly:

If the things which exist according to relation constitute each other reciprocally, how will the effect not act on the cause, the desiring on the object of desire, and also the knower on the object of knowledge, if indeed each [*scil.* cause and effect] comes to be in actuality together? And yet how is it possible that the effect acts on the cause?

*DP* 11, 156,19–157,3

3 See in particular Plotinus, *Enn.* v.3.5, 21–28. Cf. Gertz (2016) 479–481.

4 This doctrine is taken for granted for all late Neoplatonists. One also sees this referenced in Plotinus, when he takes the One filling the position of a prior 'intelligible' to Intellect in *Enn.* v.4.2, 12–26.

5 *ET* Prop. 161, esp. 140,25–27. Here I follow Gertz (2016) (esp. 479–483) in my analysis of Being and Intellect, while in this chapter I focus more on Damascius' claims about causality, which are applied between Being and Intellect.

6 *DP* 11, 142,22–24.

εἰ τὰ κατὰ σχέσιν ὑφεστῶτα ἀντισυνίστησιν ἄλληλα, πῶς οὐχὶ δράσει τι καὶ τὸ αἰτιατὸν εἰς τὸ αἷτιον, καὶ τὸ ὀρεκτικὸν εἰς τὸ ὀρεκτόν, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ γινώσκον εἰς τὸ γινωσκόμενον· καὶ γὰρ εἰ<sup>7</sup> ἐνεργεῖα γίνεται ἅμα ἐκάτερον. καίτοι πῶς οἶόν τε τὸ αἰτιατὸν εἰς τὸ αἷτιον δρᾶν;

The problem that Damascius sketches here is how the cause can be considered a cause in act only when the effect also comes to be in actuality: phrased this way, one might wonder whether the effect acts on the cause in constituting the latter's causality. Damascius has in mind the case of Being producing Intellect, whereby Being constitutes Intellect as a knower. Yet insofar as Intellect thinks Being, Intellect would seem to constitute Being *reciprocally* as an object of knowledge. Likely for this reason, Damascius adds that the object of knowledge is superior to the knower in certain respects, yet the knower, in other respects, is superior to the object.<sup>8</sup>

By speaking of both principles as existing 'according to relation' (τὰ κατὰ σχέσιν ὑφεστῶτα), Damascius implicitly references Aristotle's *Categories* 10, where things like the 'double' and 'half', as well as the knower and object of knowledge, have their existence by being oppositely related to each other.<sup>9</sup> For instance, the double is called what it is as 'double' of the half, and *vice versa*. The 'double' is then what it is in relation to the 'half', so that one term is not referred to without the other term being implied. Aristotle's second example

7 Not following Westerink-Combès' deletion: one can still read the conditional as highlighting the issue in the antecedent. Cf. their translation 157,2–3: '... car l'un et l'autre deviennent en acte ensemble. Cependant, comment est-il possible que l'effet exerce une action sur la cause?'

8 DP 11, 142,20–24.

9 Aristotle, *Cat.* X, 11b24–33: 'Things opposed as being in relation to something (πρὸς τι) are called just what they are, of their opposites or in some other way in relation to them. For example, the double is called just what it is (double) of the half. Again, knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and the object of knowledge are opposed as things in relation to something (πρὸς τι), and knowledge is called just what it is, of the object of knowledge, and the object of knowledge too is called just what it is, in relation to its opposite, knowledge; for the object of knowledge is called an 'object of knowledge' by something—by knowledge. Thus things opposed as things in relation to something (τὰ πρὸς τι) are called just what they are, of their opposites or in some other way in relation to one another' (trans. Ackrill, modified). (ὅσα μὲν οὖν ὡς τὰ πρὸς τι ἀντίκειται αὐτὰ ἅπερ ἐστὶ τῶν ἀντικειμένων λέγεται ἢ ὅπως οὖν ἄλλως πρὸς αὐτὰ· οἶον τὸ διπλάσιον τοῦ ἡμίσεος αὐτὸ ὅπερ ἐστὶ διπλάσιον λέγεται· καὶ ἡ ἐπιστήμη δὲ τῷ ἐπιστητῷ ὡς τὰ πρὸς τι ἀντίκειται, καὶ λέγεται γε ἡ ἐπιστήμη αὐτὸ ὅπερ ἐστὶ τοῦ ἐπιστητοῦ· καὶ τὸ ἐπιστητὸν δὲ αὐτὸ ὅπερ ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀντικείμενον λέγεται τὴν ἐπιστήμην· τὸ γὰρ ἐπιστητὸν τινὶ λέγεται ἐπιστητὸν τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ. ὅσα οὖν ἀντίκειται ὡς τὰ πρὸς τι αὐτὰ ἅπερ ἐστὶ τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἢ ὅπως οὖν ἄλλως πρὸς ἄλληλα λέγεται.)

of the knower and the object of knowledge is more tricky: whereas the double and half strictly exist in relation to each other, the object of knowledge, *qua* object, can still exist without the knower, although *qua* knowable it is defined in relation to the knower.<sup>10</sup> Damascius almost certainly has this particular problem in mind: in one sense the object of knowledge is prior, both by existence and by imposing knowledge in the knowable, yet in another sense, the object is reciprocally defined by the knower.

Damascius first concedes that reciprocal action does happen in the case of things that are ‘of the same order’ (τῶν ὁμοταγῶν), while causes which are of a different order, and therefore not in direct contact with the effect, do not imply any reciprocal action on the cause by the effect.<sup>11</sup> Although Damascius does not elaborate what he means with what is ‘of the same order’, this brings to mind Aristotle’s view that efficient causes which bring about their effect in another object are, in turn, acted on by the opposite property in that object.<sup>12</sup> As we saw in the last chapter, Aristotle applies this to cases of motion where both the cause and the object acted on share the same matter, while Aristotle adds a second distinction in *On Generation and Corruption* 1.7 for causes which do not share the matter of the affected objects—like the form of health, as thought by the doctor, in relation to the patient acted on.<sup>13</sup> Although the context of Being and Intellect for Damascius does not imply matter, Damascius may be applying this argument by analogy: causes that are of the ‘same order’, like matter, imply reciprocity, where causes that are of a different order, like immaterial causes, do not imply such reciprocity.

Yet given this, Damascius raises another difficulty: if the cause and the object affected are not in the same order, and are not in contact, in what sense *can* there be any causal relation?<sup>14</sup> Damascius first suggests that the

10 See e.g. Simplicius, *In Cat.* 383,22–30, where he also indicates this exception, saying that things in this kind of relation ‘possess reciprocation, but not from both parts [of the relation]’: quoted in p. 228 n.30.

11 *DP* 11, 157,3–4.

12 Aristotle, *Phys.* III.2, 202a3–11; *GC* 1.6, 323a25–32. Cf. earlier p. 84–85 ff.

13 Aristotle, *GC* 1.7, 324b4–12.

14 *DP* 11, 157,5–8: ‘Yet someone may also raise a difficulty about these things, whether something which is without contact may exercise a certain action on that which is in contact by the sole approach itself of the relation, and whether that which is affected by that [*scil.* the cause which is not in contact], without itself changing, is nevertheless said to be affected’. (καίτοι καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων ἀπορήσειεν ἂν τις εἰ τὸ μὴ ἀπτόμενον δρᾷ τι εἰς ἐκεῖνο οὐ μὴ ἄπτεται, αὐτῷ μόνῳ τῷ πλησιασμῷ τῆς σχέσεως, καὶ τὸ πάσχον ὑπ’ ἐκείνου μηδὲν αὐτὸ μεταβάλλον ὅμως λέγεται πάσχειν.)



mere 'approach' of the cause to its effect is sufficient to bring about the relation between being an object of knowledge (for the cause) and a subject of knowledge (for the effect). In other words, this suggests a kind of 'Cambridge change', where only the external properties of a thing change, while there is no internal change of nature for either or both entities.<sup>15</sup> However this possibility is ruled out when Damascius re-orientes the problem in terms of form and matter—implicitly ontological categories that would imply intrinsic change:

We say that the things which either approach [each other] or are separated take up the account of matter, while the form which belongs to the relation directly illuminates [them] when both [elements] either go to their mutual other or separate from the other. For also men who happen to come together attain a particular number from the outside, and the rod which is cut into two participates in the dyad instead of the monad.

*DP* 11, 157,8–14

ἢ τὰ μὲν πλησιάζοντα ἢ χωριζόμενα τὸν ὕλης ἐπέχει λόγον, τὸ δὲ εἶδος εὐθύς ἐπιλάμπει τῆς σχέσεως, ἥτοι ἀμφοῖν ἢ τοῦ ἐτέρου προσιόντος ἢ ἀπιόντος. καὶ γὰρ συνιόντες ἄνθρωποι τυγχάνουσί τινος ἀριθμοῦ ἔξωθεν ἐπιγενομένου, καὶ ἡ κοπεῖσα μία ῥάβδος εἰς δύο δυάδος μετέσχεν ἀντὶ μονάδος.

At first one may think that Damascius has in mind an Aristotelian hylomorphic context in his appeal to matter and form, but the two examples that Damascius lists afterward instead suggest separate forms or paradigms: in both cases Damascius speaks of a 'specific number' obtaining when elements come together or are separated, rather than an immanent feature that comes about in the elements involved. Damascius' explicit reference to the *Phaedo* makes this more clear,<sup>16</sup> where he references Socrates speaking of 'Twoness-itself', rather than the act of division or addition, as the true cause of two entities, as two, coming about.<sup>17</sup> Implicitly Damascius treats the cause both like the paradigmatic form that contextualizes the two entities, as matter, and as one of the two entities within the 'matter' of the form. We see this borne out when

15 See esp. line 157,7–8, from the previous footnote: καὶ τὸ πάσχον ὑπ' ἐκείνου μηδὲν αὐτὸ μεταβάλλον ὁμῶς λέγεται πάσχειν. Cf. Gertz (2016) 492, n. 34. On 'Cambridge change' in general, see Geach (1969) 71–72; in the context of contemporary metaphysics, cf. Lowe (2002) 238–239.

16 *DP* 11, 157,14–15.

17 Plato, *Phd.* 101b9–c9; cf. Rappe's commentary in Damascius (2010) 277, n. 21.

Damascius refers to the cause as becoming itself distinguished alongside the effect:

If the effect is also contradistinguished from the cause according to procession, and either two things have come to be instead of one, or the knower on the one hand and the object of knowledge on the other, then the account of Socrates [*scil.* from the *Phaedo*] does not even allow for the coming of one to the other for those in the same order; while both entities which belong to that which is before both, from another, do not have an account where there is nothing before both, as such are the first object of knowledge (πρώτον γνωστόν) and the first subject of knowledge (πρώτον γνωστικόν), or the first cause and the first effect.

DP II, 157,15–22

εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸ αἰτιατὸν πρὸς τὸ αἴτιον ἀντιδιέστη κατὰ τὴν πρόοδον, καὶ ἡ δύο γέγονεν ἀνθ' ἑνός, ἢ τὸ μὲν γνωστικόν, τὸ δὲ γνωστόν, τὸ μὲν ἀφ' ἑκατέρου εἰς τὸ ἕτερον ἦκειν οὐδ' ἐπὶ τῶν ὁμοταγῶν συγχωρεῖ ὁ Σωκράτους λόγος· τὸ δὲ ἀμφοῖν ἀφ' ἑτέρου τοῦ πρὸ ἀμφοῖν οὐκ ἔχει λόγον ἐφ' ᾧ οὐδέν ἐστι πρὸ ἀμφοῖν οἷα τὸ πρῶτον γνωστόν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον γνωστικόν, ἢ τὸ πρῶτον αἴτιον καὶ τὸ πρῶτον αἰτιατόν.

In our previous example, the things which come together or apart (examples that involved enmattered objects, it should be noted) come to be in cases where there is already a prior, existing Form, like 'Twoness-itself', which establishes the relation between the two entities. The difficulty Damascius shows in our passage here, as implied in the final line, is that there is no prior entity, like Twoness-itself, that grants the relation between the 'first cause' and 'first effect', in other words between Being and Intellect,<sup>18</sup> as the object and subject of knowledge. Being and Intellect are not generated together from a higher source, at least in the same way that the rod divided into two comes about in virtue of the prior Form of 'Twoness', which already exists in relation to the material pieces before they come to be together. Damascius thus sets up this

18 At least this is how I read Damascius' claim that 'the account of Socrates' does not hold, in II, 157,17–19: i.e. things 'in the same rank' receive their character, not 'horizontally' by one object added to another, as equal parts, but rather 'vertically' from the top down. The language is patchy, but Damascius appears to use 'cause' in the sense Proclus does from *ET* Prop. 7, and proximately from Plato's *Phaedo*—i.e. the Forms as 'true' causes, and causes as greater than, and transcending, their effect.

passage as a contrast with the prior example of form and matter<sup>19</sup> to show how the distinction of cause and effect comes about in procession—specifically for Intellect's procession from Being.

With this case in mind, Damascius next says that 'all that is in the effect from the cause comes to be alongside the cause with the whole substance (οὐσί-ας):<sup>20</sup> The emphasis here lies with the simultaneity of cause and effect, where the cause does not exist prior in time or by nature, but rather by acting at once in relation to the effect. As Damascius elaborates next, 'For the producer departs from itself and distinguishes the produced thing from itself: it therefore gives distinction to itself and to [the produced thing]'.<sup>21</sup> Here the language of the producer 'departing' from itself becomes evident as the causal relationship is brought about: where one can go back to the form of 'Twoness' presiding over the immediate act of bringing about two physical things (whether cutting one thing into two, or bringing two things together), Being does not exist 'prior' to the production of Intellect in the same way. In one sense, Being indeed only comes to be as a cause when Intellect is produced.

Already we can see how this is rather different from Proclus' framework: Being for Proclus remains what it is before and after the production of Intellect, both in its subsistence and causal character. One can see this in Proclus' typical formulation of production for all causes, where each produces its effect 'by its own being' (αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι).<sup>22</sup> In this respect Proclus ties together both the subsistence and causality of the producer, where its subsistence is that *by which* each lower level comes about. By contrast, Damascius detaches these two notions, where the subsistence of the producer comes first *before* it becomes a cause: producers, in their subsistence, *make* themselves causal.<sup>23</sup> We see this in

19 This can be signaled in the text with the contrastive μέν ... δὲ of the previous line 14 into the quoted line 15, in the above passage.

20 DP 11, 157,22–158,1: ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι πάντα ὅσα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ αἰτιατῷ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰτίου παραγίνεται τῷ αἰτιατῷ μετὰ τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας.

21 DP 11, 158,1–4: τὸ γὰρ παράγον ἀφίστησιν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ διακρίνει ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸ παραγόμενον· αὐτὸ ἄρα δίδωσι καὶ ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἐκεῖνῳ τὴν διάκρισιν.

22 Proclus, ET Prop. 18, 20,3–20: 'All that which by its being (τὸ τῷ εἶναι) bestows a character on others is itself primarily this [character], which it communicates to the recipients' (πάν τὸ τῷ εἶναι χορηγοῦν ἄλλοις αὐτὸ πρῶτως ἐστὶ τοῦτο, οὗ μεταδίδωσι τοῖς χορηγουμένοις). See also ET Prop. 120, 106,8–9, *In Tim.* 1, 268,6–13; 335,25–336,3; 390,9–21; 395,10–22. The background to this position can be seen in Syrianus: see his *In Met.* 114,35–115,3. Cf. D'Ancona Costa (1996) 364–366, and the general background of the doctrine of αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι, see Trouillard (1977).

23 Here, Ahbel-Rappe (1998) seems to miss the context of Damascius' emphasis on causal dynamism, for instance in 358: 'Damascius' argument seems informed by a skeptical critique that targets the relational character of causation in general. In fact, throughout the [*De Principiis*], we find a larger concern with the unknowability of relatives that extends

Damascius' example of the paradigm and image, where the paradigm 'assimilates itself' (ἀφωμοίωται) to the image in order that the image aims back towards its source by imitation and 'the desire to acquire itself'.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the paradigm *first* makes itself desirable in relation to that which it is about to bring about, with the image, which Damascius argues is necessary if the cause is to implant desire in the image to assimilate itself back to its cause. One thus finds a radical transformation of the traditional Platonic characterization of the image and its paradigm: almost always the image assimilates itself to the paradigm, whereas the paradigm does nothing, or should do nothing, in relation to the image. While Damascius upholds the asymmetrical relation that exists between the two terms, insofar as the paradigm is superior to the image,<sup>25</sup> he applies the assimilation both ways: of the image to its producer, and in turn the producer towards its image.

We see Damascius finally spell out this causal framework for Being and Intellect below:

In this way then Being (οὐσία), since it produces Intellect, pre-establishes (προϋφηνεν) itself as an object of knowledge to [Intellect], and it produces in (ἐνεποίησεν) it a power to know itself, not only by potentiality, but also superior entities communicate such a nature by actuality to inferior entities. For in this way [Being] is also the object of desire, so that it raises up the subject of desire towards itself and fills up that which desires it. In this way Iamblichus also takes the Intelligible<sup>26</sup> in relation to Intellect, so that [the Intelligible] has filled up Intellect with intellection of it.

DP II, 158,8–16<sup>27</sup>

into other aspects of Neoplatonic metaphysical speculation with which Damascius finds fault'. Yet in fact Damascius seems *exactly* concerned about the knowledge of causes only existing in relation: one cannot talk about Being as a *cause* of Intellect until it is actually causing Intellect. Thus Rappe seems to miss a crucial feature of Damascius' system, where causes change themselves in the process of producing their effects—a feature picked up by Gertz (2016), as we see below.

24 DP II, 158,4–7: 'For in this respect the paradigm even assimilates itself to the image, so that it might assimilate the image to itself. And the object of desire is placed before, and as opposed to, the subject of desire, so that it has imparted to the latter, as separated, the desire of acquiring itself' (οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα πρὸς εἰκόνα ἀφωμοίωται, ὅτι πρὸς ἑαυτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα ἀφομοιοῖ, καὶ τὸ ὁρεκτὸν πρόκειται τῷ ὁρεκτῷ καὶ ἀντίκειται, ὅτι τούτῳ ἀποστάντι ὁρεξίν αὐτὸ ἐνέπνευσεν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ τεύξεως).

25 See esp. DP II, 115,17–116,2.

26 Implicitly the principle, Being.

27 Ahbel-Rappe (1998) 358–359, quoting this passage, considers the parallels in this passage to the 'Relativity Mode' of the Skeptics. As mentioned earlier, however, Rappe fails to pick up the broader causal/ontological context in Damascius.

οὕτως οὖν ἡ οὐσία γεννήσασα τὸν νοῦν γνωστὴν ἑαυτὴν ἐκείνῳ προὔφηγεν, καὶ ἐνεποίησεν αὐτῷ δυνάμιν γνωστικὴν ἑαυτῆς, οὐ δυνάμει μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖα τοιοῦτον τὰ ὑπέρτερα τοῖς καταδεεστέροις ἐνδίδωσιν· καὶ γὰρ οὕτως ὀρεκτόν, ὅτι ἀνίστησι πρὸς ἑαυτὸ τὸ ὀρεκτικὸν καὶ πληροῖ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ὀρεγόμενον. οὕτω καὶ τὸ νοητὸν ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος ἐκδέχεται πρὸς τὸν νοῦν, ὅτι τὸν νοῦν ἑαυτοῦ πεπλήρωκεν τῆς νοήσεως.

Thus we find Damascius' solution to the *aporia* he raised earlier answered in the following way: the relationship between the subject and object of knowledge is constituted when Being produces Intellect, and in so doing it makes itself an object of knowledge and differentiates itself as one of two opposed terms. This leads to Damascius' conclusion, after the passage above, that the effect does not act on the cause, but instead the cause 'acts on itself and on the effect'.<sup>28</sup> Together with the earlier rejection of a 'Cambridge change' interpretation for the subject and object of knowledge, Damascius proposes an objective sense in which the cause 'acts on itself'. This does not mean that Being's nature is changed, but that Being accrues specific properties: it becomes 'desirable' and established as 'before' or 'opposed' to a given entity, where neither of these properties apply to Being 'before' it produces Intellect.<sup>29</sup> As we will see, Damascius characterizes the distinction between Being and Intellect in terms of the former as undifferentiated, or 'concentrated' (συνηρημένον), and the latter as differentiated, or 'unfolded'. In one sense, the subsistence (ὑπαρξις) of Being thus remains, but by becoming 'unfolded' and differentiated, the

28 *DP* 11, 158,17–22: 'Therefore, the effect does not exercise a certain action on the cause, but the cause acts both on itself and on the effect. For together with the substance [of the effect] the cause also introduces the relationship of contrast, and, if one can say this, before it makes the produced and the effect and what is capable of desire and what is capable of knowing, it makes itself knowable and desirable and cause and producer'. (οὐκ ἄρα τὸ αἰτιατὸν δρᾷ τι εἰς τὸ αἴτιον, ἀλλὰ τὸ αἴτιον εἰς τε αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ αἰτιατόν· ἅμα γὰρ τῇ οὐσίᾳ καὶ τὴν σχέσιν συμπαράγει τῆς ἀντιπαραθέσεως, καί, εἰ οἶδόν τε φάναι, πρὸ τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ παραγόμενον καὶ τὸ αἰτιατόν καὶ τὸ ὀρεκτικὸν καὶ τὸ γνωστικὸν αὐτὸ προποιεῖ γνωστὸν τε καὶ ὀρεκτόν καὶ αἴτιον καὶ παράγον.) Cf. Gertz (2016) 491–492.

29 Gertz (2016) 492 seems to mischaracterize this aspect of the passage in *DP* 11, 156,8–16: 'Damascius' answer to the skeptic, then, seems to be this: at the point of generating intellect, being undergoes a change within itself. It does not change any of the properties that it already has, nor does it gain any properties that were not already there. Rather, one might say that the cause makes some of its features visible to the effect, in order to facilitate the relationship between the two'. Gertz is certainly right about the response to the skeptic, but it seems that the addition of non-substantial properties, like desirability and being differentiated or in an opposed relation, is not the concern of the skeptic. As I understand Damascius, these properties do not exist 'before' Being produces Intellect.

internal character of Being becomes complex—and in that sense, ‘Being’ becomes distinct in producing Intellect, compared to before its production of Intellect. This is an issue we will revisit in the sections below.

We should also note that Damascius’ view of procession for Being and Intellect marks a stark contrast from Proclus. As we saw towards the end of Chapter 2, Proclus describes procession from paradigms—like Soul and souls as images of Intellect—in terms where only the produced souls are affected and turn back toward their cause by wishing to belong to their cause.<sup>30</sup> We also find in places like *ET Prop.* 67 that Proclus applies ἀφωμοίωται strictly to the participants, with the parts of a whole which assimilate themselves (ἀφωμοίωται) to their participated cause, the whole-of-parts<sup>31</sup>—and *not* the other way around, as we saw above. As mentioned earlier, Proclus implicitly combines the causal aspect of each producer with its subsistence, so that there is only one-sided affection in causation. Here we can see for Damascius that there is *two*-sided affection in causation.

### 3.2 Causal Synonymy and Similar/Dissimilar Effects

We should still get a better sense of Damascius’ claim that causes ‘change’ themselves, and how this change brings about the effect: in what regard do they change, and how does this affect the product? One issue that we have just grazed but not yet analyzed is how Damascius understands causal synonymy, particularly how the effect comes about from the cause’s nature. Although he denies equal reciprocity between causes and their effects when they are of a ‘different order’, like Being and Intellect, Damascius still emphasizes that they must exist in a symmetrical relation, in some sense: Being, in its causality, conforms itself towards its effect, Intellect, while Intellect conforms itself towards Being as its source. This becomes a crucial issue, we will see, for the difficulties raised about the One’s transcendence over all things, and in what sense it can be distinct as a principle.

*De Principiis* III, 7–9, and 31–45, again pick up the question of how causality is possible for entities of different orders.<sup>32</sup> Whereas in our last section we

30 Proclus, *In Parm.* 745,28–746,9. Cf. earlier p. 111–116.

31 Proclus, *ET Prop.* 67, 64,13–14. Cf. earlier p. 105–107.

32 *DP* III, 7,12–14. Although the examples Damascius uses in elaborating the question are with the Orphic gods in mind, i.e. Zeus and the procession of Athena (something different from Zeus), they are applicable to the more familiar Neoplatonic hierarchy (and for Damascius, as earlier Neoplatonists, the Orphic structure of gods maps on to its

considered whether the effect acts on the cause from *DP* II, 156–158, here the question is switched around: how does the cause produce an effect which has a subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) different from that of itself? To ask with a more concrete example in mind, how does Intellect proceed from Being, where both differ by their natures? In the previous section, Damascius merely considered how a causal relation can be established between Being and Intellect, where they both belong to different orders of being. Here, Damascius asks how Intellect can come forth out of Being, if Being's subsistence is distinct from Intellect. As we saw earlier, for Proclus this would be answered in terms of Being producing a participated entity or power according to similarity—thus like itself in comparison to the final effect—while Intellect in turn produces itself by self-constitution (αὐθυπόστατον) from this power or entity. For Proclus, the production of Intellect from Being is external to Being's subsistence. Damascius, however, thinks that this results in a causal gap: one still needs to explain the transition from Being's subsistence to the produced effect, Intellect. On Damascius' reckoning, the production of Intellect from Being must be *internal*, in some sense, to Being's subsistence. Damascius addresses this in *DP* III, 11,5–10, when he raises the difficulty of how Being can contain Intellect by its causality (κατ' αἰτίαν) and yet be different by its subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν).<sup>33</sup> The difficulty is extended to the derivation of all levels of being, from the intelligible triad—Being, Life, and Intellect—to the lower levels of Soul and the nature of bodies, insofar as the actuality of the produced entities differs from the actuality of the prior causes.<sup>34</sup>

With this background in mind Damascius in *DP* III, 33–34, distinguishes between products that are the same in kind as their producer, and products that are different in kind from their producer.<sup>35</sup> To address the difficulty implied for this latter category of causality, Damascius begins by distinguishing

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correlating Neoplatonic metaphysical structure—e.g. Zeus is mapped to the 'father of the Triad', Being, and so on).

33 *DP* III, 11,20–12,7.

34 *DP* III, 11,10–19.

35 *DP* III, 31,1–7: 'Perhaps, then, the division of each producer, and that of the products, is two-fold: one kind, according to vertical [division] (κατὰ βάθος), is of the entire series that emanates by descent; and the other kind, according to horizontal [division] (κατὰ πλάτος), is that of the forms contained in it, or of dissimilar parts. For the division according to what is vertical consists of similar parts, which have been anticipated in [the producer], and so it is also the same in name (συνώνυμος); while the other [division] is of a dissimilar form, from which the generation by this [kind of division] differs in name (έτερόνυμος): (μήποτε οὖν διττός ὁ ἐκάστου μερισμός τοῦ παράγοντος, καὶ ὁ τῶν παραγομένων, ὁ μὲν κατὰ βάθος τῆς καθ' ὕφεσιν ἀπορροεύσεως ὅλης σειρᾶς, ὁ δὲ κατὰ πλάτος τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ περιεχομένων εἰδῶν ἢ μερῶν ἀνομοιομερῶν. ὁ μὲν γὰρ κατὰ βάθος ἐν αὐτῷ προειλημμένος μερισμός



between the concepts of 'subsistence' and 'cause' between the producer and produced thing:

Let us also say first that the subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) of the generator is one thing, and another is both the cause of the generated thing and especially [the cause] of that which is different in form (ἀνομοειδοῦς). For if, in the world below, what is in potentiality exists alongside subsistence, as Aristotle demonstrated clearly, it is entirely the case that what is by causality (τὸ κατ' αἰτίαν) is something different beside the subsistence. And yet, if the subsistence of the generator is alone, and if it were to generate from itself and according to itself, how will it generate something which is different in form, when there is nothing else which is mixed in with it besides itself? For since it generates through its being (τῷ εἶναι), it will bring to existence the generated entity according to the transmission of its own proper nature. It is therefore necessary that it also anticipate (προειληφέναι)<sup>36</sup> the particular cause of that which is of a dissimilar form, according to which [the subsistence], being something different, will generate another, distinct thing. Further, if one thing is accordingly generative of something simply different without some anticipating cause, why does a chance thing not proceed from a chance thing which has a particular subsistence without a cause?

*DP III, 33,18–34,15*

καὶ δὴ λέγωμεν πρῶτον ὅτι ἄλλη μὲν ἢ τοῦ γεννῶντος ὑπαρξίς, ἄλλη δὲ ἢ τοῦ γεννωμένου αἰτία, ἄλλως τε καὶ ἢ τοῦ ἀνομοειδοῦς. εἰ γὰρ [δ]<sup>37</sup> ἐστὶ κάτω τὸ δυνάμει παρὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν, ὡς ἔδειξεν ἐναργῶς Ἀριστοτέλης, πάντως ὅτι καὶ τὸ κατ' αἰτίαν ἄλλο παρὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν. ἔτι δέ, εἰ μόνῃ ἐστὶν ἢ τοῦ γεννῶντος ὑπαρξίς, ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς δὲ γεννᾷ καὶ καθ' ἑαυτήν, πῶς ἔτι γεννήσει τι ἀνομοειδές, μηδενὸς ἑτέρου αὐτῇ ἐγκαταμεμιγμένου παρ' ἑαυτήν ὄντος; τῷ γὰρ εἶναι γεννώσα κατὰ μετὰδοσιν τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως ὑποστήσει τὸ γεννῶμενον· δεῖ ἄρα προειληφέναι τινὰ καὶ αἰτίαν τοῦ ἀνομοειδοῦς, καθ' ἣν ἄλλο τι οὕσα ἄλλο γεννήσει. ἔτι τοίνυν εἰ ἄλλο ἀπλῶς ἄλλου γεννητικὸν ἄνευ τινὸς αἰτίας προειλημμένης, διὰ τί μὴ τὸ τυχόν γε ἀπὸ τοῦ τυχόντος πρόεισιν, ὑπαρξιν ἔχοντός τινα τὴν ἄνευ αἰτίας;

ὁμοιομερὴς ἐστίν, διὸ καὶ συνώνυμος· ὁ δὲ ἄλλος ἀνομοειδής, ὅθεν καὶ ἢ κατὰ τοῦτον γέννησις ἐτερώνυμος.)

36 On 'anticipation' and πρόληψις in Damascius, see below p. 238 n.54.

37 Following deletion by Westerink-Combès.

One issue that Damascius highlights here, as we saw earlier, is that effects are produced only by causes which are in actuality the character that they produce—similar to Aristotle's own formulation of causal synonymy, where 'man produces man'.<sup>38</sup> Damascius makes this explicit by his reference in line 34,2, to Aristotle's *Met.* Θ.6, where we find that what exists in actuality is distinguished from what exists in potentiality. Aristotle takes as an example the statue of Hermes that exists in the block of wood, although it only exists potentially, whereas the wood-block's existence in actuality is distinct insofar as the statue is not yet there.<sup>39</sup> Damascius applies this analysis to the producer's ὑπαρξίς and the potentiality for the effect to come about: by analogy Intellect is 'in' Being, like the statue in the wood-block, by potentiality, even though Being's subsistence is still distinct. Yet Damascius also recognizes Proclus' principle that causes produce 'by their being' (αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι), as we have seen earlier.<sup>40</sup> The problem Damascius puts forward is this: if the producer causes only by its subsistence—as Proclus appears to say—then it is unclear how an effect, which is different in kind (ἀνομοειδοῦς) from the producer's subsistence, comes to be. If we look back at Proclus' framework, the problem might initially be apparent: Being contains Intellect by its causality (κατ' αἰτίαν), but this is only insofar as Being is *potentially* Intellect, whereas Intellect solely causes itself by its self-constitution. Therefore, one could think, Being is only *derivatively* a cause, as we saw in the last chapter: A is causative of C insofar as A produces B, which in turn produces C. Damascius however highlights a tension hidden in this model: if A is described as a cause of C, and if all causality is by a synonymy of terms, then A must possess the potentiality to *become*, in some sense, the same in kind as its final product, C.

We see this interpretation borne out by Damascius' next suggestion that, if the cause does not have anything 'mixed in with itself' outside its subsistence, the cause produces by a 'certain part' of its subsistence:

Then surely if [the cause] were to generate through its being (τῷ εἶναι), while the being of each [cause] is its proper subsistence, it is clear that what is of a dissimilar form is also generated from its proper subsistence: so that what is called the cause was a certain part of the subsistence. For the first of the considerations indeed holds well of the opposite conclusion:<sup>41</sup> that that which is in potentiality is in a certain part of its

38 See e.g. Aristotle, *Met.* Z.9, esp. 1034a21–30. Cf. earlier p. 82 ff.

39 Aristotle, *Met.* Θ.6, 1030a30–35. Cf. Westerink-Combès' note in *DP* I, 34, n. 2.

40 Cf. p. 82 n.22.

41 Westerink-Combès in *DP* I, 187, n. 1, refer this line to the earlier 34,18–21, where Damascius casts doubt on whether the producer's subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) can form a causal relationship

subsistence, for its form is said to have been disposed towards something distinct, and [it is said] to be in potentiality,<sup>42</sup> as the bronze is of a statue. For the bronze by nature is easily-molded, and the ‘easily-molded’ is, as it were, a part of the nature of the bronze.

*DP III, 34,21–35,5*

ἔπειτα εἰ τῷ εἶναι γεννᾶ, τὸ δὲ εἶναι ἐκάστου ἢ οἰκεία ὑπαρξίς, δῆλον ὡς καὶ τὸ ἀνομοιοειδὲς ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας γεννᾶται ὑπάρξεως· ὥστε καὶ ἡ λεγομένη αἰτία μέρος τι ἦν τῆς ὑπάρξεως. ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον τῶν ἐπιχειρημάτων εὖ ἔχει πρὸς τὸ ἐναντίον· καὶ γὰρ τὸ δυνάμει ἐνόν τινι μέρος ἐστὶ τῆς ὑπάρξεως· τὸ γὰρ εἶδος αὐτοῦ πεφυκέναι λέγεται πρὸς ἄλλο καὶ δυνάμει εἶναι, ὡς ὁ χαλκὸς ἀνδριάς· φύσει γὰρ εὐπλαστος ὁ χαλκός, καὶ τὸ εὐπλαστον οἶον μέρος ἐστὶ τῆς χαλκοῦ φύσεως.

In this case Damascius re-interprets Proclus’ principle of production (αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι) according to given specifications, or implied properties, in the producer’s subsistence (ὑπαρξίς): rather than the ‘whole’ of the producer’s subsistence considered as a cause for a dissimilar effect, a ‘part’ of that subsistence can be considered as the cause. Thus in Damascius’ example, the form of the bronze in itself—as the ‘whole’ of itself—does not explain the potential statue in it, but rather an aspect of the bronze’s form—namely the property, ‘easily-molded’ (εὐπλαστον), which is a ‘part’ of the form. By analogy, if Being is a cause of Intellect, it is so according to a ‘part’ of its subsistence, namely the potentiality to be intelligible, as we saw in the previous section.

Damascius ends up calling this kind of production a production by the ‘part’ of the producer’s subsistence, and thus an ‘inclination’ by the cause towards the effect, which mirrors Damascius’ previous claim that causes ‘act on themselves’:

But if subsistence and cause are the same, how is generation of the same form, on the one hand, yet of a dissimilar form, on the other? In truth, insofar as one case is by subsistence (κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν), [the cause] is of the same form, while insofar as it is not simply (ἀπλῶς) [by subsistence], but by inclination (<κατὰ> τὴν νεύσασαν) in relation to the generation of

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with an entity of a different kind. Damascius’ response here is to distinguish between the ‘whole’ of the producer’s subsistence and a ‘part’, which may be considered as that by which the dissimilar effect comes about.

42 Following Westerink’s translation of this line: ‘car on dit que sa forme est apte à être aussi en puissance à l’égard d’autre chose’.

another, then [the cause is] of a dissimilar form. For perhaps the cause is nothing more than the subsistence inclined towards otherness, and through this it becomes a producer of something different (έτεροποιός), while in the case of [subsistence] which remains by itself, [it becomes] a producer of what is the same (ταυτοποιός). But even that which is of the same form (όμοειδής) could not be generated, if the subsistence, as simple, did not incline: for universally the cause of what is generated is the generator (γεννών). What then is the difference with the cause, if every cause is an inclination of that which generates in relation to what is generated?

DP III, 35,6–16

ἀλλ' εἰ ταῦτόν ὑπαρξίς καὶ αἰτία, πῶς ἢ μὲν ἐστὶν ὁμοειδής, ἢ δὲ ἀνομοειδής γέννησις; ἢ ὅση μὲν κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν, ὁμοειδής, ὅση δὲ οὐχ ἀπλῶς, ἀλλὰ <κατὰ> τὴν νεύσασαν πρὸς ἑτέρου γέννησιν, ἀνομοειδής. μήποτε γὰρ ἡ αἰτία μηδὲν ἄλλο εἶη ἢ ὑπαρξίς εἰς ἑτερότητα νεύσασα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἑτεροποιός γενομένη, ἢ δὲ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς μείνασα, ταυτοποιός. ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ἡ ὁμοειδής, εἰ μὴ νεύσειεν ἢ ἀπλῶς ὑπαρξίς, οὐκ ἂν γεννηθείη· καὶ γὰρ ὅλως τὸ γεννῶν αἴτιον τοῦ γεννωμένου. τίς οὖν ἡ διαφορά τῆς αἰτίας, εἴπερ πᾶσα αἰτία νεύσις ἐστὶ τοῦ γεννῶντος πρὸς τὸ γεννώμενον;

In the first half of the passage (lines 35,6–12) Damascius distinguishes between production by 'simple' subsistence (κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν, ἀπλῶς)—standing for producers of entities that are the same in kind (ταυτοποιός)—and production by 'inclination' (κατὰ τὴν νεύσασαν)—standing for producers of entities that are different in kind (έτεροποιός). This latter kind would implicitly be correlated with Damascius' distinction, above, of production according to a 'part' of the producer's subsistence. It is telling that Damascius attributes 'otherness' as the property by which different entities are produced: one may recall the *Anonymous Commentary's* argument that otherness is the intermediate term that introduces the distinction between the One and Being, so that 'otherness' is responsible for the production of Being from the One.<sup>43</sup> Damascius seems to be making a similar move, insofar as the 'part' of the subsistence which results in different entities produced is merely 'otherness', or distinction—which we find developed below. One further observation for this passage is that Damascius ends up including even production of entities that are the 'same' in kind to an inclination by the cause, implicitly since the cause introduces a

43 Cf. earlier 1.2.1.

relation between the generator (γεννῶν) and what is generated. This should, again, bring to mind Damascius' claim that causes, when they produce their effect, act on themselves by introducing an opposed relation between themselves and their effect.

Damascius' reference to the producer's inclination toward 'otherness' brings us to his definition of production in terms of 'concentration' (συναίρεσις) and 'unfolding' (ἀνέλιξις):

For inasmuch as all things proceed from [the producer], they are contained in the producer according to a single concentration, which it is necessary to posit as the subsistence of the latter (*scil.* the producer). For all that which each [producer] is, [the producer] puts forward as many things from itself, and all products are an unfolding (ἀνέλιξις) of the producer's concentration, just as every number is a progression of the monad. For in this way we say that [the producer] is universal and [the products] are more divided (μερικώτερα), inasmuch as they distribute [for themselves] the circumference of the whole [producer] according to the part.

DP III, 35,19–36,3

πάντα γὰρ ὅσα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πρόεισι περιέχεται ἐν τῷ προάγοντι, κατὰ μίαν συναίρεσιν, ἣν ὑπαρξιν ἐκείνου τίθεσθαι ἀναγκαῖον. ὅσα γὰρ ἕκαστόν ἐστι, τοσαῦτα προβάλλεται ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ ἔστι τὰ παραγόμενα πάντα ἀνέλιξις τῆς τοῦ παράγοντος συναίρεσεως, ὡς πᾶς ἀριθμὸς τῆς μονάδος ἐστὶ προποδισμός· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὸ μὲν ὀλικόν, τὰ δὲ μερικώτερα λέγομεν, ὅσα διανέμεται κατὰ μέρη τὴν τοῦ ὅλου περιοχὴν.

Here the two kinds of production for similar and dissimilar kinds are both reduced to an 'unfolding' (ἀνέλιξις) of the subsistence that pre-contains all lower, subsequent effects. In this Damascius appears to be claiming that the producer and its products, even for entities that have a different subsistence, are essentially the same in kind. The products then become a projection of the producer's nature, while the differentiation of the producer's subsistence, or its inclination into 'otherness', results in the differing kinds of entities (ἀνομοειδούς). And yet if we bear in mind Damascius' earlier claim that the producer 'inclines' itself towards the produced entities that are the same in kind (ὁμοειδής), even this is also a kind of projection of the producer—in other words, one does not have the same 'concentrated' state of the producer in the ὁμοειδής entity. This suggests, on the one hand, that the producer in its 'concentrated' state bears no relation, as such, to either ἑτεροειδής or ὁμοειδής

entities, while *when* the producer unfolds itself, then one or the other kind of relation is established.

Damascius later goes on to specify that the producer's generation of ὁμοειδῆς entities is by the 'whole' of its subsistence—or rather the 'vertical concentration' (κατὰ βάθος συνηρημένην) of its subsistence—while the generation of ἑτεροειδῆς entities is by a 'part' of its subsistence, as earlier, or one particular among the other potential, distinct entities that come forth from the producer.<sup>44</sup> So far this is not different from Proclus' description of procession from the *Parmenides Commentary*, where he also describes production in roughly the same two ways: either according to the 'whole' of the producer, for entities that are the same in kind—like particular intellects from Intellect—or by an 'alteration in substance' (κατ' οὐσίαν ἐξαλλαγὴν) in the produced entity, as an image to its paradigm.<sup>45</sup> However one should note that Proclus does not consider the second kind, with images from paradigms, as coming directly from the producer's subsistence: instead Proclus describes souls as 'proceeding' from Intellect, without Intellect directly producing them, by which the 'alteration in substance' happens. By contrast the producer, for Damascius, *directly* produces ἑτεροειδῆς entities, insofar as it produces by a 'part' of its subsistence. The parallel in language to Proclus, yet with the emphasis of causality shifted to the producer, suggests that Intellect has a more direct role in producing entities distinct from itself—implicitly Soul and other souls—inasmuch as it produces through a 'part' of its subsistence.<sup>46</sup> This is a notable departure from Proclus' model, where there is a clean separation between causal mechanisms: Intellect directly produces only what is like itself—i.e. by the 'whole' of its subsistence—while different entities come to be only by their self-constitution. Damascius' distinction of producers producing by a 'part' of

44 DP 111, 36,7–20. It should also be noted, Damascius' horizontal/vertical distinction is not to be confused with the similarly-phrased coined distinction in Van Riel (2001a).

45 Proclus, *In Parm.* 745,28–746,9. Cf. earlier p. 111–113.

46 In the context that this shows up in DP 111, 36,7–20, Damascius seems to indicate Intellect producing other intellects that are ἑτεροειδῆς: implicitly that they only contain *part* of the content (or certain of the Forms) in Intellect. This would be a notable departure from Proclus' position in *ET Prop.* 170, where all individual intellects contain the same content of Intellect-itself, i.e. the same set of Forms, differing only according to a single aspect (καθ' ἐν). In Damascius' case, although Intellect produces certain intellects that are ἑτεροειδῆς—while remaining the same in kind, as 'intellect'—their character subsequently anticipates the nature of souls below them, which are so characterized as only *partially* containing the Forms by participation. In this respect Intellect-itself is directly involved in producing Soul and all souls, inasmuch as it anticipates the latter's character through a 'part' of itself.

their subsistence is thus unique compared to Proclus, and it further suggests that Damascius attempts to attach a more direct causal link between higher principles and their produced entities.

Damascius ultimately settles on this language of ‘concentration’ and ‘unfolding’ to explain the dynamic of production between higher and lower entities for the rest of the section, up to *DP* III, 45. We also see this language carried throughout the rest of the *De Principiis*, especially with Being’s production of Intellect. As Damascius concludes later on, ‘everywhere the external plurality, which is being distinguished in the things generated from [the source], develops from the internal [plurality] which is concentrated (συνηρημένου) in the entities which generate’.<sup>47</sup> As we have seen in the appeals to the principle of causal synonymy, Damascius links the ‘external plurality’ to the ‘internal plurality’ that is in the proximate generator, where the difference between the two is that the latter is ‘concentrated’ and without distinction or differentiation compared to the ‘external plurality’. By positing a synonymous relation between the external plurality and the generator, one can say that causality exists between the higher and lower entities, although according to ‘concentration’ and ‘unfolding’ from the side of the generator.<sup>48</sup> The generator-as-unfolding forms an identity in kind with the ‘external plurality’, insofar as the generator makes itself distinguished in the process of production.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, the distinction between the generator as ‘concentrated’ and ‘unfolded’ is what accounts for the distinction between the cause’s subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) and that of the effect. Thus while Intellect results as a kind of ‘manifestation’ of Being, this does not mean that the same character is conveyed, but rather Intellect acquires its own particular character (ιδιότης) which does not exist distinctly beforehand in Being’s ‘concentrated’ state.<sup>50</sup>

47 *DP* III, 39,22–24: πανταχοῦ τὸ ἕξω πληθος διακρινόμενον ἐν τοῖς ἀπογεγνωμένοις ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶσω συνηρημένου ἐν τοῖς γεννώσιν ἐκφύεται.

48 *DP* II, 158,17–22. Cf. p. 126–128.

49 *DP* III, 40,1–5: ‘And the cause for something being productive, which pre-subsists in the generator, is in some way seen entirely in the product to be pre-sketched in the generative cause according to its subsistence and concentration’. (αἴτιον δὲ τὸ γόνιμόν τε εἶναι, ὃ προὔπαρχει ἐν τῷ γεννῶντι, καὶ πᾶν ὅπερ ὁράται ἐν τῷ γεννωμένῳ προὔπογράφεσθαι πως ἐν τῇ γεννώσῃ αἰτίᾳ κατὰ τὴν ἐκείνης ὑπαρξίν τε καὶ συναίρεσιν.)

50 *DP* III, 42,17–23, esp.: ‘We say that distinction (διάκρισιν) is what establishes each thing according to its own subsistence, whereas what was beforehand was not its own character (ιδιότης). For it had not yet been differentiated into its particular character when it existed as a whole concentration’. (ἢ διάκρισιν λέγομεν τὴν ἰστώσαν ἕκαστον κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὑπαρξιν, ἢ πρότερον οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῦ ιδιότης· οὕτω γὰρ εἰς ιδιότητα διεκέκριτο κατὰ τὴν ὅλην συναίρεσιν.)



The final significance of Damascius' language of 'concentration' and 'unfolding' between causes and their effects is that it implicitly separates the transcendent aspect of the producer from its causality, in a way that is not the case in Proclus' model. This is especially apparent from the last section, where Damascius concludes that 'causes act on themselves and on their effects'. This notion is conveyed here when Damascius describes producers 'inclining' toward their effect, either as a whole or by a 'part' of their subsistence (ὑπαρξις). We may then conclude that, for Damascius, the producer's subsistence (ὑπαρξις) is its 'concentrated' state (C1)—thus, 'before' the causal process happens—while the producer's 'inclining' towards either similar (ὁμοειδέες) or dissimilar entities is its 'unfolded' state (C2)—thus, during the causal process. (C1) then represents the transcendent aspect of the producer, while (C2) represents the causal aspect, when the cause is in a synonymous relation to the effect produced. This would indicate that the same 'content' is preserved between (C1) and (C2), but the mode of that content differs either as undifferentiated, in (C1), or differentiated, in (C2).<sup>51</sup> One can already see that this marks a contrast to Proclus, where the cause's subsistence—as (C1)—is that *by which* causality happens; whereas in Damascius, the cause's relation to its effect entails a symmetrical relationship that necessitates distinguishing (C1) from (C2).

51 As an application of this principle, see *DP* II, 158,17–22, where Damascius identifies Intellect *not* with the 'object of knowledge' (γνωστόν) but rather the 'content of knowledge' (γνωσμά). (For this latter word, Damascius appears to be the only source using the term in Liddel and Scott. I follow Gertz (2016)'s translation, which is justified from the context of *DP* II, 149,12–17, where Damascius correlates γνωστόν/γνωσμά with δόξαις (opinion)/δόξασμα (content of opinion); αἰσθησις (perception)/αἰσθημα (content of perception), etc.) Cf. *DP* II, 151,23–152,3, where knowledge is defined as according with the 'manifestation' (φαινόν) of Being, rather than Being-itself. See also *DP* II, 160,24–161,4 (an otherwise-cryptic, difficult passage), where Damascius appears to claim that Intellect imitates Being—which transcends it, as (C1)—according to its own mode of being, while Being, in turn, makes itself knowable—as (C2)—relative to Intellect. Given our analysis of Damascius' causal model, the skeptical interpretation offered on Damascius' account of knowledge should be avoided (e.g. Ahbel-Rappe (1998) 368), following Gertz (2016). Andron (2004)'s 'perspectivist' interpretation (122; cf. Gertz (2016) 487–488) offers a better reading, although it should also be taken cautiously, since Damascius affirms the synonymy between 'internal' and 'external' plurality corresponding to the producer and its effect. By comparison, Andron seems to suggest that only an aspect or 'part' of the content is conveyed between Being and Intellect.

### 3.3 Unparticipated Causality and Self-Constitution

From what we have seen, Damascius makes causes directly synonymous with effects which are different in kind (*ἀνομοειδής*), like Being's production of Intellect. Because of this shift from Proclus' model, one might think that intermediaries, like participated causes, are superfluous in Damascius' system. Furthermore, self-constitution for Proclus is essential to explain how different kinds of entities are produced: Intellect, strictly speaking, causes itself *qua* Intellect, even though the power for it to do so comes from Being. In Damascius, if Being produces a different entity, like Intellect, according to a 'part' of its subsistence, this would also suggest that self-constitution is superfluous, if Being causes Intellect.

Yet as we will see, Damascius retains both unparticipated/participated causality and self-constitution from Proclus, however he modifies these two mechanisms within his revised system. Self-constitution for Damascius indicates an entity's differentiation from the cause, which is 'concentrated' and more unified, thus indicating the actuality of that entity's character.<sup>52</sup> Participated causes maintain their functionality of conveying a universal effect across distinct participants, as in Proclus, but Damascius applies his causal model to these types of causes: each participated cause internally anticipates the character of its participant. This latter case is again different from Proclus, where participated causes—like particular souls—maintain their transcendence over participants like bodies. For Damascius, however, particular souls internally anticipate the passive, changing character of the bodies which participate them. This again reflects Damascius' shift in causality compared to Proclus.

#### 3.3.1 *Self-Constitution and Reversion*

While Damascius follows Proclus in holding that self-constitution explains each entity's self-subsistence in the intelligible realm, Damascius ends up characterizing self-constitution as a sign of differentiation within the entity in relation to the producer. At the same time the unity of the entity is also referred back to the same activity, where otherwise pure differentiation results in the entity's separation into parts on the material level. We see Damascius' view of self-constitution implying both differentiation and dependence on a prior

<sup>52</sup> It is worth noting, as a likely indicator that self-constitution plays a less significant role in his system, Damascius makes only 8 references to *αὐθυπόστατον* in the *De Principiis* (out of 37 total in Damascius' works), according to a word search in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae ('TLG' afterward). By contrast, Proclus makes 139 references throughout his corpus.

cause set out in *De Principiis* 1, 53. Damascius here shows why Intellect, though an unmoved mover, is not the true first principle since it is only qualifiedly unified rather than simply unified or 'one':

'Unified' does not pertain to Intellect purely, without its opposite, since the intellective form obtains substance together (συνουσίωται) with that which has been distinguished by the same as a whole (κατὰ ταὐτὸν ὅλον). Thus, that which has been unified in some way (πῇ ἡνωμένον) is in need of the absolutely Unified (ἀπλῶς ἡνωμένου),<sup>53</sup> and that which is together with another is in need of what is by itself, and that which is by participation is in need of what is by [its own] subsistence. For in fact Intellect, being self-constituted, brings itself forth as unified and distinguished at once (ἡνωμένον ἅμα καὶ διακεκριμένον). Hence it is by the combination of both (κατὰ τὸ συναμφοτέρον); so that which is unified will be brought forth from what has been absolutely unified, i.e. what is only unified.

*DP* 1, 53,16–25

ὁ δὴ νοῦς τὸ ἡνωμένον οὐκ ἔχει καθαρὸν τοῦ ἀντικειμένου· συνουσίωται γὰρ τῷ διακεκριμένῳ κατὰ ταὐτὸν ὅλον τὸ νοερὸν εἶδος. δεῖται ἄρα τοῦ ἀπλῶς ἡνωμένου τὸ πῇ ἡνωμένον, καὶ τὸ σὺν ἄλλῳ τοῦ καθ' ἑαυτό, καὶ τὸ κατὰ μέθεξιν τοῦ κατὰ ὑπαρξιν. καὶ γὰρ ὁ νοῦς αὐθυπόστατος ὣν παράγει ἑαυτὸν ὡς ἡνωμένον ἅμα καὶ διακεκριμένον· κατὰ τὸ συναμφοτέρον ἄρα· κατὰ ἄρα τὸ ἡνωμένον [ἀπλῶς]<sup>54</sup> ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπλῶς ἡνωμένου παραχθήσεται καὶ μόνον ἡνωμένου.

Damascius indicates self-constitution as a sign that the properties of being unified (ἡνωμένον) and differentiated (διακεκριμένον) exist together in Intellect. The property of being differentiated belongs uniquely to Intellect, rather than the Unified,<sup>55</sup> while the property of being unified is an inherited property from the 'absolutely Unified' (ἀπλῶς ἡνωμένον). Why would Intellect not be the 'absolutely Unified'? Damascius attributes this to Intellect's nature as an

53 For Damascius, the Unified is roughly equivalent to the principle, Being, for Proclus. However Damascius crucially breaks from Proclus by making the Unified a henad, whereas in Proclus Being is the first multiplicity since it is composed from the two distinct properties, the Limit and Unlimited. See below, n. 69. Cf. Van Riel (2010) 680–681.

54 Following W-C's deletion.

55 Whereas differentiation becomes progressively manifested in Life: see *DP* 111, 123,7–8, 12–17. For Damascius' general description of Being, Life, Intellect, see *DP* 111, 122,21–124,20. Cf. Van Riel (2010) 680–681. See also figure in p. 244.

‘intellective Form’ (νοερὸν εἶδος), which simultaneously implies the two properties of being unified and differentiated together. Intellect’s self-constitution then brings these two properties into act, which otherwise exist potentially in the Unified. Damascius lays stress on absolute unity as the basis for Intellect’s nature, while Intellect only has the Forms brought into being in the activity of self-constitution—when differentiation results.<sup>56</sup>

The emphasis on differentiation suggests a greater sense of contingency on higher principles for self-constitution, which is different from the way Proclus presents the concept:<sup>57</sup> for instance, Proclus marks self-constitution as the main indicator of the first, unparticipated principles of the different levels of being<sup>58</sup>—in other words, indicating respectively the autonomy of those principles. For Damascius, instead of suggesting autonomy, self-constitution implies inferiority for an entity in comparison to its higher principle. One sees this in the *Philebus Commentary*, where Damascius raises a difficulty about the nature of self-constitution:

How can something be self-constituted? For it will be and not be at once: as that which produces, it will be, while as what is produced, it will not be; and [that which constitutes itself] will be different from itself as a whole. We answer that such a thing is really double, but the combination (συναμφότερον) is one and the same thing; in duality, the mover is thought of as superior to the moved, just as in the combination the undivided is superior to the divided.

*In Phil.* 116,1–6

πῶς ἂν εἴη τι αὐθυπόστατον; ἔσται γὰρ ἅμα καὶ οὐκ ἔσται· καθὼ μὲν γὰρ ποιεῖ ἔσται, καθὼ δὲ ποιεῖται οὐκ ἔσται· καὶ ὅλως ἕτερον ἔσται αὐτὸ ἑαυτοῦ. ἢ διπλοῦν τι τῷ ὄντι τὸ τοιοῦτο, ταὐτὸν δὲ ὅμως τὸ συναμφότερον· ἐν δὲ τῇ διπλῇ τὸ κινεῖν τοῦ κινουμένου κρεῖττον ἐπινοεῖται, ὥς ἐν τῷ συναμφοτέρῳ τὸ ἀμέριστον τοῦ μεριστοῦ.

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- 56 This kind of argument recalls Plotinus’ characterization of the difference between the One and Intellect, where Intellect, by trying to revert towards the One, reverts on itself and brings about the Forms through its inner differentiation. Cf. earlier, p. 29 ff.
- 57 Although see, e.g., Proclus, *In Parm.* 1150 ff. Even in this context, Proclus mentions the ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ elements in self-constitution only in the context of showing why the One, itself, cannot be self-constituted as all the lower entities are. The difference between Proclus and Damascius here is more on emphasis, not in how self-constitution basically functions.
- 58 Proclus, *ET Prop.* 99. Cf. earlier p. 114–116.

Prior to raising this difficulty, Damascius considers whether self-constitution is possible for entities in time, since 'otherwise [the entity] would exist and not exist at the same time'.<sup>59</sup> While taken as an absurdity in this case, the language is repeated with the self-constituted entity as something that 'will be and not be at once', as both producer and product. The same absurdity would follow, but for the fact that time is negated for truly self-constituted entities, as Damascius already says earlier in *In Phil.* 113.<sup>60</sup> It is notable that Damascius does not resolve the tension here, but still maintains that the two elements co-exist in one 'combination' (συναμφοτέρῳ), implicitly without parts or time, but with a real division between producer/produced and undivided/divided.<sup>61</sup> One should note the contrast here with Proclus, who concludes with the simplicity of self-constitution (e.g. in *ET Prop.* 47), and yet elsewhere admits that self-constituted entities imply a 'superior' and 'inferior' element within themselves.<sup>62</sup> It is perhaps with this unreconciled tension in mind that Damascius openly admits differentiation in self-constitution, while conceding that there is only a qualified unity for self-constituted entities. Thus Damascius still holds that a 'superior' element pre-dominates within the process of self-constitution,<sup>63</sup> but it still points to the necessity for an external superior entity that supports this combination. Once again, this all the more suggests the contingency, and dependence, of self-constituted entities on the 'superior' element, which would be located in that which is not differentiated.

The notion of contingency for self-constitution is brought out again in Damascius' discussion of the soul, which, as the principle of life and self-motion in bodies, is the last unified principle by its existence before the level of body. Following previous Neoplatonists like Proclus, Damascius interprets the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* as pertaining to the soul,<sup>64</sup> insofar

59 *In Phil.* 113,4–5.

60 *In Phil.* 113,3–6. Cf. Proclus, *ET Prop.*s. 50–51.

61 Van Riel in his edition of Damascius, *In Phil.* 36, n. 3 (in p. 129), notes a contradiction between *In Phil.* 116 and 113 with self-constitution and divisibility: 'L'affirmation du caractère double (διπλοῦν) de l'αὐθυπόστατον contredit ce que Damascius en a dit au §113 (ἅτε μεριστόν οὐκ ἔστιν αὐθυπόστατον), l'αὐθυπόστατον n'est donc pas absolument indivisible'. However it is not obvious why this is so: one can affirm αὐθυπόστατον as a two-fold nature without implying that it is divided in separate parts (μεριστόν), i.e. without unity. Damascius still appears to affirm this sense of unity explicitly in 116 and implicitly in 113.

62 Cf. Proclus, *In Parm.* 1150,6–8.

63 This also hearkens back to Aristotle's emphasis that self-motion breaks down into an unmoved moving part and a moved/moving part: see Aristotle, *Phys.* VIII.4–5.

64 See Steel (1978) 87–88, esp.: 'Indeed, the place of the soul "halfway between" the intelligible and the sensible realities can only be expressed in mutually contradictory terms. If this is so, then the soul must also occupy a similar intermediate position in the sequence of the hypotheses as they are intended to reflect the articulations of reality, namely,

as the hypothesis' use of both affirmations and negations for the 'one' indicates the soul's intermediate status between the unity of the intelligible world and the multiplicity of the physical world.<sup>65</sup> The soul's nature as a mixture of both one and many, and not-one and not-many, is then derived from its self-constitution:<sup>66</sup> in its existence it is a unity and multiplicity, mirroring the world of Intellect, but in anticipating the separated multiplicity of the physical world in itself, it is not-one and not-many.<sup>67</sup> While the soul inherits its unity and plurality from the intelligible world, it constitutes the lower level of being not-one and not-many as a mixture, as it becomes participated by the physical world which only has unity by participation and is properly not-many and not-one in its being. In this sense, the soul's self-constitution also implies an anticipation of the lower level of body, insofar as it implies the elements, 'not-one' and 'many', found in the participating bodies and the physical world.

This anticipation of attributes on a lower level in self-constitution is brought out when Damascius characterizes the Unified's self-constitution as a 'projection' of pre-existing, incipient 'elements' within itself:

Moreover, by its self-constituted procession, the Mixed (*scil.* the Unified) projected from itself, and at the same time distinguished in itself, the elements which are ranked in opposition to each other. For the whole in fact distributes the parts in itself and from itself: in the same way that which is composed of elements, which is the Mixed as such, subsists prior to (προϋπάρχον) the elements, in the sense that it is superior to them; it distinguishes the elements in itself and from itself. For always the undivided exists before divided things.

DP II, 45,5–12

between the One (considered in [the *Parmenides*] hypotheses 1 and 2) and the Others (considered in 4 and 5). [...] As the lowest form of the One, the soul bears the Others in it paradigmatically though the unity in it still predominates'.

65 Damascius, *In Parm.* IV, 35,19–22; see Steel (1978) 88.

66 Damascius, *In Parm.* IV, 8,4–7: 'Secondly, I wish to point out that this mixture of "one" and "not-one", of "being" and "non-being", is self-constituted (αὐθυπόστατον) in the soul: hence it is brought forth from this one, but it is not assumed from the predicates previously demonstrated'. (δεύτερον δὲ ἐκεῖνο ἐπισημαίνομαι, ὅτι τὸ μίγμα τοῦτο αὐθυπόστατόν ἐστιν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, τὸ ἐν καὶ οὐχ ἐν καὶ ὄν καὶ μὴ ὄν· ἐντεῦθεν γὰρ ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀναφύεται, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν προδεδειγμένων λαμβάνεται). Cf. Steel (1978) 89.

67 Damascius, *In Parm.* IV, 6,14–21; see Steel (1978) 90. One should note here the contrast to Proclus, where the latter affirms that participated soul in its οὐσία is changeless and eternal, although its activities (ἐνέργειαι) are in change and temporal: see *ET* Prop. 191; on the general differences between Proclus and Damascius on soul, see Steel (1978) 94 ff.

ἔτι δὲ κατὰ τὴν αὐθυπόστατον αὐτοῦ πρόοδον τὸ μικτὸν ἅφ' ἑαυτοῦ προεβάλετο, καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ στοιχεῖα συνδιήρηκεν ἀντιτεταγμένα ἀλλήλοις. καὶ γὰρ τὸ ὅλον ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἅφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὰ μέρη ἐπιμερίζει· ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ στοιχειωτόν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ μικτόν, προὔπαρχον δὴ τῶν στοιχείων, οἷά γε κρεῖττον αὐτῶν ὄν, ἐπιδιακρίνει ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἅφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὰ στοιχεῖα· πρὸ γὰρ αἰὲ τῶν διαιρουμένων τὸ ἀδιαίρετον ὑφέστηκεν.

The passage comes at the conclusion of a discussion on where the Unified is placed below the One.<sup>68</sup> Among the different positions considered, Damascius looks at what is effectively Proclus' view, where the Unified (i.e. Being)<sup>69</sup> results from the mixture of the Limit and Unlimited below the One.<sup>70</sup> Damascius ends up denying this position, since it characterizes the two principles above the Unified as separate from each other: instead for Damascius the two principles, as monad and dyad, share the same nature, since unity and multiplicity are co-referential.<sup>71</sup> Because neither the monad nor dyad are fully distinct from each other, the Unified's self-constitution manifests the two characters together, making explicit the distinction between the two that is only implicit in the two, higher principles.<sup>72</sup> Thus when Damascius describes the 'pre-subsisting of the elements' for the Unified in *DP* 11, 45, this is reflected in the previous two principles of the monad and dyad above the Unified, which are absolutely undivided, while the Unified's characteristic of distinction for the two elements—while remaining 'one' in being—is fully brought out in its self-constitution.<sup>73</sup>

We may however recall the earlier *De Princ.* 1, 53, where Damascius says that Intellect is self-constituted while the Unified is simple and undifferentiated, whereas in *De Princ.* 11, 45, above, the Unified is said to be self-constituted, and implicitly differentiated. This apparent inconsistency is

68 *DP* 11, 40,1–41,5.

69 On the identification of Being and the Unified, see *DP* 11, 56,1 ff.

70 Although at this point in *DP* 11, 40,9–11, Damascius attributes to Philolaus the view of the Unified as a mixture of the Limit-Unlimited, which he also links with the Pythagoreans' 'third principle' as a combination of the monad and dyad.

71 *DP* 11, 44,12–19. For further discussion, including Damascius' position on the Limit and Unlimited from Proclus and Iamblichus, see below, 5.2.3.

72 *DP* 11, 44,19–45,4.

73 Although we should remember, Damascius says that the Unified is not differentiated, like Intellect, although a kind of distinction first exists in it. Damascius distinguishes between 'plurality' and 'differentiation' later in *DP* 11, 156,17–22, saying that the Unified first manifests the character of plurality, not differentiation *per se*; Intellect then manifests both the character, 'plurality', and differentiation *per se*.



reconciled when Damascius says that the Unified—Being, in this context—is only relatively self-constituted, from the vantage point of Intellect, while in itself it is not:

Is Being (τὸ ὄν) not something which has reverted towards itself and is self-constituted, both proceeding from itself and remaining in itself? We say that it appears to be in this way for us being divided about its single simplicity,<sup>74</sup> while it itself is not among these things in the same way, but it has been put in possession of a single communion (κοινωνίαν) of the three [stages],<sup>75</sup> and it is this which has been concentrated in the entire community of all things. For in another way it should be necessary for that which is either by reversion, by procession, or by remaining to be itself only that which it is in an absolute way. For it is not each of these [stages] absolutely, but it is substance (οὐσία) such as it happens to be remaining, proceeding, or reverting, and the whole appears to have been divided. By which [fact] it is clear that it is substance, life, and knowledge in proceeding, all which, in relation to each other, are namely contradistinguished terms according to distinction. But the middle nature which is not yet something of these is neither substance, life, nor knowledge, but already a certain birth-pang and progression, and in that which is called 'Being' (ἐν τῷ καλουμένῳ ὄντι) there is not even a trace.

DP II, 169,7–22

τὸ ὄν οὐκ ἐπεστραμμένον ἐστὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καὶ αὐθυπόστατον, αὐτὸ τε ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ προῖόν καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῷ μένον; ἢ φαντάζεται μὲν εἶναι τοιοῦτον ἡμῖν τοῖς περὶ τὴν μίαν αὐτοῦ ἀπλότητα μεριζομένοις, αὐτὸ δὲ ὅμως οὐδὲν μὲν τούτων ἐστίν, τὴν δὲ μίαν τῶν τριῶν εἴληχε κοινωνίαν, καὶ ταύτην μέντοι συνηρημένην ἐν τῇ ὅλῃ κοινωνίᾳ τῶν πάντων. καὶ γὰρ ἔδει ἄλλως τὸ κατ' ἐπιστροφὴν τινα ὄν ἢ πρόοδον ἢ μονήν, αὐτὸ μόνον εἶναι (δ) ἀπλῶς ἐστι· τούτων γὰρ ἕκαστον οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τοιάδε οὐσία μένουσα τυχὸν ἢ προϊούσα ἢ ἐπιστρέφουσα, καὶ τὸ ὅλον φάναι διωρισμένη· ᾧ δὲ ὅλον ὅτι ἐν τῷ προελθόντι ἐστὶν ἢ οὐσία καὶ ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἡ γνῶσις, αἴ γε κατὰ διαίρεσιν ἀντιδιεσταλμένα πρὸς ἀλλήλας· ἢ δὲ μέση φύσις οὕτω τι τούτων, οὔτε οὐσία, οὔτε ζωὴ, οὔτε

74 Compare with DP I, 4,6–12, where Damascius uses the same statement for 'our' perspective of the One's simplicity. In this context, it is the *Unified's* simplicity that confronts us. Discussed below in p. 235 n.47.

75 Namely the causal stages of 'remaining', 'procession', and 'reversion'—specified afterward.

γνώσις, ἀλλ' ἤδη τούτων ὡδὶς τις καὶ προκοπή· ἐν δὲ τῷ καλουμένῳ ὄντι οὐδὲ ὑπόφασις.

As has been seen, self-constitution is related to entities or elements which are 'opposed' to each other, whereas for something which is absolutely simple none of these attributes apply. Since Being's nature is absolutely simple, the attribute of self-constitution does not apply to it properly except 'from our perception'. It is tempting to interpret this line in a purely subjective manner, where the perception of self-constitution (alongside remaining, procession, and reversion) is a projection from the side of the perceiver. In some sense this is right, although Damascius' mention of Being having a kind of 'birth-pang and progression' suggests that it pre-contains those attributes that are brought out in self-constitution. We can connect this with earlier passages where Damascius refers to higher levels possessing the lower, differentiated effects in a higher, transcendent way, so that it is only when causes like Being produce Intellect that they become determined<sup>76</sup>—while in itself, Being exists as undetermined. This would follow from what we have seen of Damascius' model of two stages for producers, between a 'concentrated' and 'unfolded' phase (earlier [C1] and [C2], respectively). From this, Damascius appears to link self-constitution to the 'unfolded' phase of Being, from the vantage point of Intellect,<sup>77</sup> while in itself, as 'concentrated', it is not distinguished, and therefore not self-constituted.

### 3.3.2 *Unparticipated/Participated Causality*

For unparticipated and participated causality, Damascius largely follows Proclus' framework, although with certain, important modifications in light of his revised approach to causality. Just as we saw with self-constitution, unparticipated/participated causality for Damascius implies a dependence on higher principles that, when applied to the One, do not in themselves imply a distinction between unparticipated and participated. This becomes an important factor in why Damascius shifts away from Proclus' framework of describing the One in terms of being unparticipated.<sup>78</sup>

76 One can see this in Damascius' characterization of Being in *DP* 11, 160–161, where Being reciprocally takes on the attributes of Intellect in the process of producing Intellect: cf. p. 137 n.51.

77 Assuming that Damascius includes Intellect as the subject for the 'we' who are 'divided about [Intellect's] single simplicity' in lines 169,9–10.

78 Although, as in the first passage below, Damascius occasionally refers to the One as 'unparticipated'. From lower levels of being the distinction between unparticipated and participated becomes manifested because of the participants' mode of existence as differentiated. It is at the higher levels, at the Unified, that the distinction disappears.

We find Damascius' view on unparticipated and participated causes stated succinctly in *De Princ.* III, 101–102, where Damascius directly links the dependence of unparticipated entities on prior participated causes:<sup>79</sup>

Moreover, the absolute Soul depends on a particular intellect, and not the absolute (ἀπλῶς) Intellect; absolute Intellect depends on a particular life, but not absolute Life; and absolute Life, therefore, depends on a particular being, but not the first Being. Therefore absolute Being also appears in such a way as a vehicle (ὄχημα) of a particular henad, but not the absolute Henad:<sup>80</sup> but it is necessary that the absolute Henad is before a particular henad, since the unparticipated is always absolute, but the participated is never absolute.

*DP* III, 101,21–102,2

ἔτι δὲ ἡ ἀπλῶς ψυχὴ νοῦ τινὸς ἐστὶν ἐξημμένη, καὶ οὐ τοῦ ἀπλῶς, καὶ ὁ ἀπλῶς νοῦς τῆς τινὸς ζωῆς, ἀλλ' οὐ τῆς ἀπλῶς, καὶ ἡ ἀπλῶς ἄρα ζωὴ τῆς τινὸς οὐσίας, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τῆς πρώτης. οὕτως ἄρα καὶ ἡ ἀπλῶς οὐσία τινὸς ἐνάδος, ἀλλ' οὐ τῆς ἀπλῶς ὄχημα φανεῖται· δεῖ δὲ πρὸ τῆς τινὸς εἶναι τὴν ἀπλῶς ἐνάδα· αἰεὶ γὰρ ἀπλῶς ἀμέθεκτόν ἐστι, τὸ δὲ μεθεκτὸν οὐδέποτε ἀπλῶς.

On the one hand, Damascius preserves Proclus' essential framework that all lower entities depend on higher, absolute principles through participated intermediaries. Damascius in turn follows Proclus' view that each participated term, as a specific or particular entity, depends on a principle that is not particular, but 'absolute' (ἀπλῶς): e.g. a particular intellect depends on what is simply (ἀπλῶς) Intellect, without any other character or delimitation.<sup>81</sup> One difference from Proclus is in Damascius' description of unparticipated principles as dependent on higher, participated causes—for instance, 'absolute', unparticipated Being is a 'vehicle' (ὄχημα) of a particular henad,<sup>82</sup> while unparticipated Soul depends on a particular intellect, as above. One also sees this earlier

79 This is rather unlike Proclus, who emphasizes the autonomy of unparticipated causes, where they are solely causes of themselves in terms of their specific subsistence (ὑπαρξίς): see *ET Prop.* 99, discussed earlier in p. 114–116. Damascius doesn't disagree with this in principle, however as we will see, if the higher principle of a given unparticipated entity anticipates that character—and that principle changes itself as a cause to mirror what its effect—this de-emphasizes the autonomous nature of unparticipated causes.

80 Implicitly the One.

81 Proclus, *In Parm.* 707,8–708,5; *ET Prop.*'s. 21, 23.

82 Cf. Van Riel (2010) 682–683.

in *DP* III, 79, where participated entities are described as being 'used', like an instrument or vehicle, by their higher principles, just as a particular soul, for example, is 'used' as an analogous instrument by its participated intellect.<sup>83</sup> By contrast, Proclus emphasizes the autonomy of unparticipated principles insofar as each constitutes its own being and does not derive its specific character or subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) from a higher cause. As noted earlier in Chapter 2,<sup>84</sup> while Being implies Life and Intellect as a higher cause (κατ' αἰτίαν), Life and Intellect for Proclus, as unparticipated first principles, derive their character from themselves;<sup>85</sup> in this sense, Being is a 'cause' only by providing the potentiality for Life and Intellect to constitute and cause themselves. Yet as we have just seen in Damascius' causal model, Being is a 'cause' of Life and Intellect only if it anticipates these latter two principles within itself. Given the passage above, Damascius seems to de-emphasize the autonomy that Life and Intellect have, compared to Proclus, since they are directly determined by their higher principles.

The shift in the causal model is reflected when Damascius describes each participated cause as containing the nature of its participant as a particular character (κατὰ ιδιότητα), while each has its own nature by existence (κατὰ ὑπόστασιν): thus a given participated intellect has its participant's character—for instance, 'soulness'—κατὰ ιδιότητα; however it is intellective in itself κατὰ ὑπόστασιν, which it derives from unparticipated Intellect as intellective both κατὰ ιδιότητα and κατὰ ὑπόστασιν.<sup>86</sup> In a sense this is similar to Proclus' distinction between κατ' αἰτίαν and καθ' ὑπαρξιν,<sup>87</sup> however Damascius' claim that

83 *DP* III, 79, 1–13. Proclus may at least agree that participated causes function as analogous 'instruments' for unparticipated causes, as has been argued earlier: cf. 2.1.3. Damascius in this respect makes this position explicit.

84 Cf. p. 90 ff., esp. p. 92 n.74.

85 Cf. Proclus, *ET* Prop. 99, 103.

86 *DP* III, 82, 1–9: 'In either case, the change is to each, but one immediately through the more akin character toward the participated, the other further through the more true toward the unparticipated. Therefore we will also ascend in this way from the apparent unmoved first to the intellect pertaining to soul (lit. 'psychic intellect', τὸν ψυχικὸν νοῦν), which is self-moved according to its character (κατὰ ιδιότητα) alone, and unmoved according to its existence (καθ' ὑπόστασιν), but is also secondary to the entirely unmoved just as it is truly this, and in this way it is the unparticipated Intellect'. (ἢ ἐφ' ἑκάτερον μὲν ἢ μετὰ βᾶσις, ἀλλὰ προσεχῶς μὲν διὰ τὸ συγγενέστερον εἰς τὸ μεθεκτόν, πορρωτέρω δὲ διὰ τὸ ἀλλοθίστερον εἰς τὸ ἀμέθεκτον. οὕτως ἄρα καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ φαινομένου ἀκινήτου ἀναβησόμεθα πρῶτον μὲν ἐπὶ τὸν ψυχικὸν νοῦν, τὸν κατὰ ιδιότητα μόνην αὐτοκίνητον, ἀκίνητον δὲ καθ' ὑπόστασιν, δεῦτερον δὲ εἰς τὸν πάντη ἀκίνητον καὶ ὡς ἀλλοθὺς τοιοῦτον, οὗτος δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ ἀμέθεκτος νοῦς.)

87 Although one should note the difference between ὑπαρξίς and ὑπόστασις for Damascius, which is where the analogy may break down here. See Steel (1978) 113, n. 78: 'ὑπαρξίς and οὐσία are clearly distinguished by Damascius in *De Princ.* §120–121 [= *DP* II, 52–55

the participated is synonymous with its participant *κατὰ ιδιότητα* suggests a stronger link between the participated and participant.<sup>88</sup> This also shows how the participant's nature is reflected *within* the participated entity.<sup>89</sup> In turn, both the participated and participant imply a kind of mutual entailment of properties: the participated intellect has 'soul' as its character (*ιδιότης*) and 'intelligence' as its existence (*ὑπόστασις*), while the participating soul has 'intellect' by participation and is yet 'soul', or being self-moved, by its existence (*ὑπόστασις*). As we saw with soul's self-constitution in the last section, the soul also anticipates the character of its participant, with bodies and the physical world, by also changing in its substance (*οὐσία*), although it retains its numerical identity, as well as its own character as 'soul', by its existence (*ὑπόστασις*).<sup>90</sup>

One important application of participated causes anticipating the participants can be found in Damascius' view that the gods, as participated henads, pre-contain their participants' effects throughout all orders of being. Encosmic and even 'material' gods, for instance, pre-eminently contain the character (*ιδιότης*) of being encosmic or enmattered in a unitary way, while their character becomes manifested derivatively as it passes through more differentiated levels—through participated intellects and souls, for instance—down to the final effect within matter, in differentiation.<sup>91</sup> In his description of this process, Damascius criticizes 'the philosophers' (implicitly Proclus) for naming the gods from their 'final vehicles' (*ἐσχάτων ὀχημάτων*), where this implies that the henads are reciprocally determined (*εἰδοποιουμένους*) from the participants' level.<sup>92</sup> As Gerd van Riel notes, Damascius' position on the henads essentially differs little from Proclus', however Damascius gives a new, distinct take:<sup>93</sup> Proclus would also hold that the henads pre-contain their effects' character, although strictly by their subsistence (*ὑπαρξίς*) as a unity, so that the character becomes determined only in its effects. On this understanding,

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(Westerink-Combès)]. Ὑπαρξίς denotes the first principle of every existence (*ὑπόστασις*), the foundation (*θεμέλιον*) of the whole structure of the essence, the pure being without the different qualifications which make it a determined essence (*οὐσία*).

88 Although this is similar to the henads for Proclus which are identified and differentiated by their particular character (*ιδιότης*), which is determined from the participants: *ET* Prop. 116, 102, 22–23, and Prop. 123.

89 At least one sees this in Damascius' description of moving from the 'apparent' instantiation to the 'true' instantiation of a property, when he distinguishes between participants, participated entities, and the unparticipated, in *DP* 111, 81, 23–82, 1.

90 Cf. Steel (1978) 109.

91 *DP* 111, 81, 2–22.

92 *DP* 111, 81, 5–7.

93 Van Riel (2010) 682–683.

'material gods' are so-called insofar as the character belonging to 'matter' becomes determined at the level of the effects. For Damascius, that character should already be manifested pre-eminently in the henad as a cause, together with the henad's existence (ὑπόστασις) as a unity. An essential part of this analysis lies in how causality is considered, and namely in what respect each henad causes its effect: for Proclus each henad's unity is that by which production happens, whereas for Damascius both unity and being, together, are productive of all lower entities.<sup>94</sup> Each henad must then have the elements of unity and being combined together, including the character conveyed, by which all lower effects come about. One may again see Damascius' distinction between causes as 'concentrated' and 'unfolded' at work here: the henads have both elements of unity and being without differentiation, while at lower levels these elements become differentiated down to the final effect.<sup>95</sup> Thus each 'material god' is 'enmattered' as such, yet the character, being 'enmattered', exists according to that henad's undifferentiated existence (κατὰ ὑπόστασιν): what we then know as 'matter' exists in differentiation in the effects' mode of being, compared to the level of the henads where all things are undifferentiated. Here we may detect distant echoes of the Plotinian picture of the One which we saw in Chapter 1, where the One as the 'power of all things' (δύναμις πάντων) implied its pre-containment of all beings in its unity. As we will see, this becomes a central theme we later find in Damascius' construal of the One.

Finally when we consider the relation between the One and the henads, which Proclus characterizes as unparticipated and participated, respectively, Damascius instead claims that the distinction between the two kinds of causes disappears:

94 On Proclus, see *ET* Prop. 25 (esp. 28,23–25), and Prop. 113. On Damascius, see his *In Parm.* 1, 4,10–5,5; 5,15–23. Cf. Van Riel (2010) 683: '[The henads'] causal operation is no longer seen as the effect solely of the summit of the combination (that is, of the one that drives upon being), in which process the ongoing specification is given by the specific being upon which the henad rides; rather, the combined existence of one-and-being sets itself as a cause on every level. Hence, in Damascius, the specificities of the beings that depend on a henad are not the result of the element of 'being' in the combination (the henad in itself remaining identical with the One), but they are caused by the previous One-Being as such'.

95 *DP* 111, 114,26–115,13. See also Westerink-Combès' commentary *DP* 1, 115, n. 3 (in p. 212). In this regard Damascius (in *DP* 111, 115,9–13) implicitly makes the Unified the first henad below the One—or One-All (cf. below, p. 272–274)—when he says that it is the 'third principle' relative to the superior level (i.e. of the One-All/All-One), while it is the 'first principle', or the apparent 'One', relative to inferior levels (i.e. Intellect, Soul, etc.).

We respond<sup>96</sup> that the participant and the participated up there are not differentiated, nor the participated and the unparticipated, nor yet the many and the one. For that nature was ‘one’ only, and the second principle was said to be ‘many’ as one nature, a cause of those things which are in any way subject to differentiation, as the power of unity from itself that is able to differentiate and is generative.<sup>97</sup> Therefore such a nature is not subject to the processions that come to be from the One with any differentiation whatsoever. For it wishes to be ‘one’ alone, both that which is in every way (τὸ παντοῖον) and before all things (πρὸ πάντων), from which those things that have such a [differentiated] nature appear as secondary or tertiary entities.

*DP* 111, 86,6–15

ἢ οὕτω ἐκεῖ διεκρίθη τὸ μετέχον καὶ μετεχόμενον, οὐδὲ τὸ μεθεκτὸν καὶ ἀμέθεκτον, οὐδὲ τὰ πολλὰ καὶ τὸ ἓν· ἔν γάρ μόνον ἦν ἡ φύσις ἐκείνη, καὶ ἡ δευτέρα ἀρχὴ πολλὰ ἐλέγετο ὡς μία φύσις, αἰτία τῶν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον διακρινομένων, δύναμις οὖσα αὐτόθεν τοῦ ἐνὸς διακριτικὴ καὶ γόνιμος. οὐκ ἄρα πέφυκεν ἡ τοιαύτη φύσις ὑπομένειν τὰς κατὰ διάκρισιν ἡντιναοῦν γιγνομένας ἀφ’ ἐνὸς προόδους· ἔν γάρ εἶναι βούλεται μόνον καὶ ἔν τὸ παντοῖον καὶ πρὸ πάντων, ἀφ’ οὗ δεύτερα ἢ τρίτα φαίνεται τὰ τοιαῦτα γιγνόμενα.

Damascius then denies that the distinction between unparticipated and participated obtains when we get up to the henads and the One—or specifically in the case of the Unified<sup>98</sup>—since both terms imply differentiation where none exists between the One and the Unified.<sup>99</sup> This line of argument is similar to

96 In answer to the question, from *DP* 111, 86,3–6: ‘Why is there not, proper to the One which is beyond the Unified, a procession beyond the Unified, i.e. one unparticipated, the other participated by the Unified?’ (διὰ τί γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι καὶ τοῦ ὑπὲρ τὸ ἡνωμένον ἐνὸς ἴδιος πρόδος ὑπὲρ τὸ ἡνωμένον, ἡ μὲν ἀμέθεκτος, ἡ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡνωμένου μετεχόμενη;) The question seems to be why there is not a ‘procession’ of participated henad(s) from the One, and a second procession, in turn, from the henad to the Unified. Implicitly this references Proclus’ view that Being participates two henads—the Limit and Unlimited (and proceeds from the two)—which are in turn participated entities derived from the One.

97 The first ‘nature’ and ‘second principle’ implicitly reference Damascius’ first two principles, the One-All and All-One, defined in *DP* 11, 39,11–25: see below, p. 272–274.

98 One then needs to contextualize *DP* 111, 101,21–102,1, quoted above: Damascius must either mean ‘Being’ (where Damascius tends to equate this term with the Unified) as in the intelligible in the third intelligible triad (νοητόν–νοερόν)—in other words within the triad of Intellect, where differentiation is fully manifested. Only then can one speak of Being and its henad in a participated/participant relationship, as in the passage.

99 While Proclus would also say there is no internal ‘differentiation’ between the henads (as participated) and the One (as unparticipated), distinction obtains only when considering



Damascius' reasoning that 'one' and 'being' are not separate from each other in the henads. In turn, Damascius emphasizes that the One's unity predominates over the Unified's nature,<sup>100</sup> so that the latter cannot be distinct like a participant, which implies a different nature to the participated entity. Nor can the 'first' or 'second' before the Unified be distinguished as unparticipated or participated, in relation to the Unified, since to be 'participated' implies having one set of participants distinct from another participated cause's set of participants. Instead the same set of properties are shared between the One, the 'second principle' which is the cause of differentiation, and the Unified, while what 'distinguishes' each principle (although undifferentiated) is the relation between each.<sup>101</sup> Thus one cannot use Proclus' framework of the unparticipated and participated to analyze the top level of principles, between the One and the Unified. Instead, the distinction between the unparticipated One and participated henads comes about only when we look at principles where differentiation becomes manifest: namely in the second and third intelligible triads, or Life and Intellect respectively, and further downward. Thus, the 'material gods', above, would be distinguished from the 'unparticipated' principle of unity, which in this case would have to be the Unified, which pertains to all participants and not just specific participants, like those in matter belonging to the 'material gods'.

One final outcome we should note—which should also be considered when we discuss Damascius on the One and the Ineffable in Chapter 5—is that Damascius' denial of the unparticipated/participated distinction for the One implies that it is notionally related to plurality. In Proclus' framework, the One's status as unparticipated secures both its transcendence over plurality and its causality of all beings which imply plurality. In Damascius' framework, causality is entailed only within a mutually opposed relation to the effect, as

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the particularity of the effects of unity either in specific orders of being (thus, the domain of participated henads), or across all domains of being at once (thus, the domain of the One). Damascius then differs from Proclus only with the first two 'henads', i.e. the Limit and Unlimited, since they share the same participants; thus Damascius contends that they cannot be considered as separate, 'participated' principles as in Proclus' framework, since there are no participants that have an instance of 'limit' without the 'unlimited' as well. On this background, see below, 5.2.3.

100 Cf. *DP* III, 89,16–18.

101 Damascius will go on to argue for this three-fold distinction of principles on the basis of predication by analogy, implicitly from the realm of Intellect where the triad of stages (remaining, procession, reversion) is manifested: see esp. *DP* I, 127–131. Discussed more in depth below, 5.2.2. Damascius' 'three principles' in this sentence also correlate with what he will define as the One-All, the All-One, and Unified.

we have seen throughout this chapter. In this sense, the One's relation to the Unified, and thus to all things, necessitates an immediate relation to plurality and all things. Thus, Damascius' removal of the unparticipated/participated distinction at the higher levels helps lead in this direction.

### 3.4 Conclusion

One of the central issues that Damascius raises is that causes, as such, can only be described within a relation to the effect that is produced. Consequently, the cause cannot be considered in the same way as both transcendent and causally synonymous with the effect, as one would think in Proclus' framework. This does not necessitate skepticism on Damascius' part, as some contemporary commentators read him,<sup>102</sup> but it leads to the need to make a distinction in the causal process: the claim that causes 'act on themselves' from *DP* II, 158,<sup>103</sup> is essential to see how Damascius distinguishes, and relates, producers in their transcendent aspect and in their causal aspect. On this point, Sebastian Gertz's worry that productive causes (like Being, when it produces Intellect) lose their transcendent status<sup>104</sup> may be assuaged, at least partly: both transcendent and causal aspects of the producer are preserved at once since intelligible causes function eternally and all at once—in this sense there is a simultaneity of identity and difference between causes and their effects in the intelligible realm.<sup>105</sup> Thus Being is transcendent, considered by itself, while when it produces Intellect, it is no longer 'transcendent' in the same way, but entails synonymy with

102 Cf. p. 20 n.69.

103 Cf. p. 127 n.28.

104 Gertz (2016) 493.

105 Gertz's worry is a subset of a more general tension (which he does not address, although it is a related issue) with the Neoplatonic notion of the three causal stages of remaining, procession, and reversion: namely causes 'remain' distinct in relation to the entities they produce (thus, 'procession'), while the produced entities maintain their synonymy, or identity, with the cause through their 'reversion'. These three stages are present all at once, and not distinctly, as would be the case for causation in time (on this general issue in Proclus, see Gersh (1973)). For a problematization of this issue, see Lloyd (1990) 128 and Dodds' commentary in Proclus (1963) 217; and for Damascius' response to this issue, see Dillon (1997), esp. 376–379. One of Damascius' responses to this issue is to say that the stage of the cause 'remaining' is relative to the effect's procession: the cause also 'proceeds' with the effect, while it appears to remain relative to the effect: see *DP* II, 118,7 ff. (cf. Dillon (1997) 373). This would be correlated with causes that 'act on themselves' when producing the effect.

the effect it produces.<sup>106</sup> Although he still uses these distinctions, Damascius reduces Proclus' two, separate causal explanations of unparticipated/participated causality and self-constitution to one with his model of producers as 'concentrated' and 'unfolded' in relation to the effect.

The final outcome of Damascius' shift from Proclus' causal framework is that it makes sense of why he claims that the One is causally synonymous with 'all things' (τὰ πάντα): just as all causes for Damascius imply a relation to their effects, so the One, as finally causing all things, must be immanently related to its effect. The One for Damascius is then not completely 'transcendent' in the way Proclus' One is, and it gives us a way to understand why he has to posit a principle—the Ineffable—before the One. In this respect, Gertz's concern still holds—which we will revisit below.<sup>107</sup> The relation between the Ineffable and the One is then analogous to the relation between causes as 'concentrated', *before* the causal process, and causes as 'unfolded', in the midst of the causal process. With Damascius' framework sketched along these lines, we will see this fully developed for the One and the Ineffable in Chapter 5.

106 To return to the language of 'Cambridge Change', it might then be conceded that Damascius maintains an ontological version of this: i.e. a substantial, rather than nominal, difference between the internal and external properties of, e.g., Being in relation to itself and in relation to its effects. On internal/external properties, see Lewis (1983).

107 See p. 275–276.

## Proclus on the One's Causality

In the last two chapters we investigated the general causal frameworks that Proclus and Damascius use to explain the derivation of the different levels of being below the One.<sup>1</sup> This background is important when we look at the One's causality, since each figure's construal of the One depends on their respective causal framework which is employed at the lower levels of being. In particular, Proclus' distinction between unparticipated and participated causes guarantees the One's transcendence and causality, while Damascius' view of causes that act on themselves in the causal process shows why the One's causality is guaranteed only when the One is grounded on a prior principle, namely the Ineffable. We will discuss this in the next, and final, chapter, but in this chapter we must consider how Proclus looks at the One and how the unparticipated/participated distinction does, or does not, apply to the One.

Recalling Chapter 1, one of the main difficulties of the Plotinian reading for the One, carried through Porphyry and Iamblichus, is that while it functions as the first cause of Being and Intellect by transcending them, the One internally anticipates the same things that it ultimately produces. One should then see Proclus' understanding of the One as an attempt to respond to this tension in the background. Following in his master Syrianus' footsteps, as we saw, Proclus breaks with the prior tradition by formulating the One's causality in a way that immediately denies that plurality is pre-contained in the One in any sense. The unparticipated/participated framework helps Proclus to accomplish this, where the One in the position of the unparticipated produces particular 'ones'—the henads—which are in turn *directly* responsible for producing plurality. As directly participated, the henads take on the character of Plotinus' One (and, more proximately, Iamblichus' One) inasmuch as they causally anticipate the character of the beings that participate in them. This leaves the One as causally synonymous *only* with the henads, which are also 'one' by their subsistence, while the One is an extra step removed from the emergence of Being and Intellect as the first plural entities. In this way, just as unparticipated causes have a dual role of transcendence and efficient causality, where their causation of a property does not imply reciprocity with the

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1 Throughout this chapter, all primary source citations refer to Proclus unless otherwise specified.

effect, so the One also maintains its position as transcendent and yet also as an efficient and final cause.

In Section 4.1 we will look in depth at Proclus' proofs for the One from the *Elements of Theology* and consider how he deals with these background concerns for blocking all implication of plurality in the One. This leads us directly to distinguishing the One in itself as unparticipated from the One as 'participated', in the form of the henads below the One. In Section 4.2 we will consider Proclus' unparticipated One within the broader context of his framework, including how this version of the One is a response to problems he sees in his predecessors who follow Plotinus' model. Because of the restricted notion of causality, we should also consider certain problematic passages where Proclus suggests that the One-itself is responsible for the derivation of matter (in Sect. 4.2.3)—which seems to break his notion that the One only produces entities like itself—in the form of the henads.

Whether Proclus' causal model for the One works ultimately depends on his construal of the One's intermediate causes, for which reason we should consider the One's participated causality in Sections 4.3–4.4. One important issue that we will see is that Proclus appears to propose *two* intermediary models: the aforementioned henads, and the Limit and Unlimited. The latter two principles are responsible for the first plurality, Being, which contains the properties of 'limit' and 'unlimited' in terms of its subsistence (ὑπαρξις) and power (δύναμις). In this sense Proclus re-appropriates the same two principles from Iamblichus' framework (via Syrianus), however with the difference that the henads are *directly* produced from the One, rather than from the Limit and Unlimited as in Iamblichus. As we will see, two issues arise: first, how to explain the relation of the Limit and Unlimited as a distinct causal model alongside the henads; and second, how the One can produce the Limit and Unlimited (and the henads in coordination with the two) without implicating it in the dual character that marks the Limit and Unlimited. This latter issue becomes a crucial problem in Proclus' account which we will briefly consider in Section 4.5.

In the end, a tension remains in Proclus' account, inasmuch as Proclus does not offer a satisfying account for how the Limit and Unlimited come to be from the One as distinct characters, if the One is only responsible for unity and does not imply any distinct characters—like the Limit and Unlimited. This issue, as I will argue in Chapter 5, ultimately precipitates Damascius' critique of Proclus' framework, inasmuch as the 'One' cannot remain absolutely transcendent apart from its effect of all things, if it functions as a cause. Whereas Proclus seeks to maintain the One's causality through its transcendence over plurality, including the Limit and Unlimited, Damascius emphasizes that the

One's causality of 'all things' means that it must anticipate the intermediate causes—implicitly the Limit and Unlimited—by which all things actually come about. Here we must see why Proclus considers the One as both transcendent and causal at once within the structure he propounds, as we saw in Chapter 2.

#### 4.1 Proclus' Proofs for the One

The background to the One as an unparticipated cause can be first seen in Proclus' proofs of the One's existence in the *Elements of Theology*, Propositions 1–6, and more thoroughly elaborated in *Platonic Theology* 11.1–2. In the *Elements*, the first six propositions establish the One's ontological priority before all pluralities. This becomes the foundation for the later proofs of the One's efficient causality (Prop. 12)<sup>2</sup> and final causality as the Good (Prop. 13).<sup>3</sup> It may be a small puzzle that the *Elements* (and in turn *PT* 11.1) does not explicitly start with the One's efficient or final causality but rather its ontological priority. Yet the beginning of *Platonic Theology* 11.1 gives an implicit reason when it shows that anything which is demonstrated about lower entities can only be done with a clear conception (ἐννοία) of the first cause of all beings.<sup>4</sup> Thus to

2 *ET* Prop. 12, 14,1–2: 'The Good is the first principle and very first cause of all beings'. (πάντων τῶν ὄντων ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία πρωτίστη τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστιν.) The 'Good' becomes identified with the One in Prop. 13, below.

3 *ET* Prop. 13, 14,24–25: 'Every good is unitive of entities which participate it, and every unification is good; and the Good is the same as the One'. (πάν ἀγαθὸν ἐνωτικὸν ἐστὶ τῶν μετεχόντων αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάσα ἐνωσις ἀγαθόν, καὶ ἀγαθὸν τῷ ἐνὶ ταύτῳ.) See esp. 14,26–27: 'For if the Good is preservative of all beings (on which account it also subsists as an object of desire for all things) [...]'. (εἰ γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστὶ σωστικὸν τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων (διὸ καὶ ἐφετὸν ὑπάρχει πᾶσι ...).)

4 *PT* 11.1, 3,6–11: 'The most appropriate beginning in the study that we propose is that from which it is possible to discover the very first cause [or 'being', οὐσίαν] of all beings. In effect, if we make it our starting point, and if we clarify the conceptions (ἐννοίας) we have of it, then we will more easily proceed to the distinction of other beings. Let us then say how it is necessary to begin concerning the subject'. (ἀρχὴ δὲ ἐστὶ κυριωτάτη τῆς προκειμένης ἡμῖν θεωρίας, ἀφ' ἧς ἂν γένοιτο τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων πρωτίστην αἰτίαν εὐρεῖν· ἀπὸ γὰρ ταύτης ὀρμηθέντες καλῶς καὶ τὰς περὶ αὐτῆς ἐννοίας ἀνακαθηράμενοι, ῥάονα (τὴν) τῶν ἄλλων ποιησόμεθα διάκρισιν. ὥδε οὖν λεγέσθω περὶ τούτων ἐξ ἀρχῆς.) In the PV manuscript 3,7–8, reads, τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων πρωτίστην οὐσίαν, while Saffrey and Westerink read 'αἰτίαν', following Thomas Taylor. See Meijer (2003) for a defense of the manuscript reading over Taylor's emendation. The argument for keeping the manuscript reading is that it better supports the dialectical beginning that Proclus takes in the beginning of *PT* 11.1: namely that, if we are trying to prove the first cause, we begin with what is most apparent for us, starting with *being*—although we will eventually find that the first cause cannot be a being/οὐσία.

establish anything about the One's causality depends on grasping the ontological makeup of the One, which we see in the nature of its priority.

Two main concerns stand out in Proclus' proofs: (1) the principle must stop an infinite regress, and (2) the principle should transcend the opposition between the various kinds of beings, implicitly up to the most basic kind of unity and plurality (or as we will see, the Limit and Unlimited). One can see the concern for (2) in earlier Neopythagoreans like Eudorus, with the first 'One' transcending the monad and dyad,<sup>5</sup> and we see it again in Iamblichus when he posits the One before the Limit and Unlimited.<sup>6</sup> In Plotinus the primary concern lies with just (1), since the One guarantees Intellect's unity, whereas the opposition implied in Intellect's duality comes about as a result of Intellect's privation of the One's unity.<sup>7</sup> By contrast in Proclus, *ET* Prop. 1 proposes plurality as a given ontological item in contradistinction to unity, not simply as a privation as implied in Plotinus. This is also seen in the principles of the Limit and Unlimited below the One, where they emerge as the first opposed set of entities below the One, while all beings are constituted from these two principles. For this reason (2) becomes an important concern for Proclus with the One, insofar as the One not only stops an infinite regress but also inasmuch as it transcends opposed entities.<sup>8</sup> The One's causality is then maintained insofar as its character of unity is shared by all beings, while as unparticipated the One bears an asymmetrical relation to what follows it, which preserves its transcendence.

Proclus' proofs for the One can be summarized from *ET* Prop's. 1–6 in the following outline:

1. All beings characterized by multiplicity or plurality have unity as their constitutive element. A *reductio ad absurdum* results if one supposes plurality only exists. [*Prop. 1*]

5 See Nicomachus *apud* Iamblichus, *Theol. Math.* 3,1–11, 4,17–5,10. Cf. Dillon (1977) 355, Boys-Stones (2017) 156–157.

6 Cf. earlier p. 59–60.

7 This may reflect the change from 'vertical' opposition in Plotinus' model—between the One and the lower levels of being, down to matter—to 'horizontal' opposition in Iamblichus' and Proclus' model—between the principles of unity and plurality (represented in the Limit and Unlimited, respectively), which come at the top level of being, immediately after the One. On the 'vertical'/'horizontal' distinction, see Van Riel (1997) 40, 46; and Van Riel (2001a). Discussed further below.

8 This also becomes the main concern for Damascius, when he construes the Ineffable as also transcending all opposites. In his case, he attempts to deny *any* implication of opposition in the Ineffable, as he thinks the transcendent One is eventually correlated, or coordinated with, plurality. See below, p. 269–272, and esp. p. 288–290.



2. The attribute of unity in these entities is a distinct property and does not belong substantially to them. They therefore have that property as an effect—or in other words, they *participate* that property. [*Prop.*s. 2–3]
3. The source of the property of unity cannot be another unified entity, which is a plurality in itself, but it must be pure unity in itself—i.e. the One. [*Prop.* 4]
4. The One must be entirely prior to all pluralities—specifically, both prior in nature and in participation (i.e. *unparticipated*). [*Prop.* 5]
5. Pluralities which receive unification must ultimately derive from directly participated unities—the *henads*. [*Prop.* 6]<sup>9</sup>

One can see the essential background for this argument in Plotinus' *Ennead* VI.9.1, where Plotinus points out various examples where things do not exist without reference to some principle of unity.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, Proclus in the *Elements* noticeably does not refer to concrete examples, as Plotinus does, but rather starts from a more abstract level, as in Euclid's *Elements*.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Euclid, the work does not begin with a set of definitions, postulates, or common notions, as even Proclus' *Elements of Physics* does with a prefatory set of definitions. Here Proclus begins by establishing the first principle for his whole system from *quia* demonstrations, beginning with what is most apparent to us—plurality, or also plurality among beings.<sup>12</sup>

9 For a detailed exposition of these listing of propositions, see Opsomer (2013) 627–632.

10 Plotinus, *Enn.* VI.9.1, esp. 1–28, with examples as the army as 'one' with its soldiers; the chorus with its many members; the house with its many parts, brick, wood, and so on; etc. See a discussion of this passage in O'Meara (1993) 44–49, with O'Meara's characterization of this as the 'principle of prior simplicity'. Cf. earlier, p. 27–29.

11 One can see this just from the name of Proclus' treatise, Στοιχείωσις Θεολογική. An excellent discussion of considering the *Elements of Theology* within the *more geometrico* method, and a comparison with Euclid's *Elements*, can be found in Martijn (2014) 151–152. One specific difference she notes is that the *ET*'s first proposition is not the most fundamental (as it is in Euclid), but rather Prop. 4, establishing the One-itself, from which all the propositions afterward follow. See also discussion in O'Meara (1989) 195–198 (esp. 198: 'If then the *Elements of Theology* appears in certain respects to be somewhat geometrical and in other respects not, this may be because the work is not a geometrical theology or metaphysics at all, but something quite different: a treatise of theology or dialectic, whose method is proper to it, while recalling to some degree the derivative but more familiar and accessible procedures of geometry'.); and Nikulin (2003).

12 One can see this as a nod to the methodological theory in the introduction of Aristotle's *Phys.* I.1, 184a16–b14, viz. demonstrating from things which are more known to us and proceeding 'towards those which are clearer and more knowable by nature' (ἐπὶ τὰ σαφέστερα τῇ φύσει καὶ γνωριμώτερα). It is also worth noting, in *Platonic Theology* II.1 Proclus begins with 'beings' and considers that they are either entirely just 'one', just 'many', or both one and many. See Meijer (2003) for a thorough discussion of this and further passages, as well as the summary of arguments from *PT* II.1–3 in Rosán (1949) 118–121. Cf. earlier n. 4.

#### 4.1.1 *ET Prop. 1–4: Unity as an Ontological Component*

For our purposes, Prop.'s. 5–6 will be important to see how Proclus establishes not simply the One before beings, as for Plotinus, but the One as unparticipated by plurality, or in other words as one additional step removed from the plurality which is unified. Beforehand we should briefly consider Prop. 1 to see how Proclus deals with his first concern about a potential infinite regress of pluralities. In this case unity as an ontological item is needed to stop the potential regress:

*Every plurality participates in unity (τοῦ ἐνός) in some way.*

(A) For if it in no way participates [in unity], neither will the whole be one, nor each of the many members from the plurality, but each of the many members will both be a plurality, and the latter [in turn] to infinity; and of these infinite members each will again be an infinite plurality. For a plurality which in no way participates unity, neither as a whole itself nor as each of the members in itself, will be infinite in every way and according to every component. (B) For each of the many—take what you may—truly will be one or not one. And if not one, certainly many things or nothing. But if each is nothing, that [component] out of these [*scil.* the whole] is nothing; and if many, each [component] is from infinitely infinite things (ἀπειράκις ἀπείρων).<sup>13</sup> (C) But these things are impossible: for neither does something among those things which exist (τι τῶν ὄντων) come from infinitely infinite things (for it is not more than the infinite, but that from the whole (*scil.* the sum) is more than each [member]), nor is something able to be put together from nothing. Every plurality therefore participates in some way in what is one.<sup>14</sup>

*ET Prop. 1, 2, 1–14*

13 Note that Proclus uses ἀπειράκις ἀπείρων in a negative sense here to show an absurdity. Compare with Damascius, *DP* 11, 33, 2–4, where the term is used, by contrast, in a positive sense as illustrating the All-One's nature as 'pure plurality'. Cf. below, p. 273 n.144.

14 Dodds' translation is fairly liberal in using 'parts', but Proclus doesn't use μέρος or μέρος in the proposition, only e.g. ἕκαστον τῶν πολλῶν (lines 2–3). This might suggest Proclus wants to pick out other constitutive entities than just proper parts (μέρα) (see e.g. Hathaway (1982) 125). Instead, Proclus directly raises the question of proper parts (μέρα) (and wholes) in Prop.'s. 66–69 and 73–74. With this in mind, I use 'component' where Dodds has 'part' in the proposition. The distinction between parts and non-proper parts can also be found in *In Parm.* 1100, 9 ff.: the 'Many' are ontologically prior to parts/wholes which belong solely to the realm of Being (*In Parm.* 1101, 3 ff.). In that context, the 'Many' include multiple henads, on the other hand, which are not parts/wholes.

πάν πληθος μετέχει πη τοῦ ἐνός.

εἰ γὰρ μηδαμῇ μετέχει, οὔτε τὸ ὅλον ἐν ἔσται οὔθ' ἕκαστον τῶν πολλῶν ἐξ ὧν τὸ πληθος, ἀλλ' ἔσται καὶ ἐκείνων ἕκαστον πληθος, καὶ τοῦτο εἰς ἄπειρον, καὶ τῶν ἀπειρῶν τούτων ἕκαστον ἔσται πάλιν πληθος ἄπειρον. μηδενὸς γὰρ ἐνός μηδαμῇ μετέχον μήτε καθ' ὅλον ἑαυτὸ μήτε καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, πάντη ἄπειρον ἔσται καὶ κατὰ πᾶν. τῶν γὰρ πολλῶν ἕκαστον, ὅπερ ἂν λάβῃς, ἤτοι ἐν ἔσται ἢ οὐχ' ἐν· καὶ εἰ οὐχ' ἐν, ἤτοι πολλὰ ἢ οὐδέν. ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἕκαστον οὐδέν, καὶ τὸ ἐκ τούτων οὐδέν· εἰ δὲ πολλὰ, ἐξ ἀπειράκις ἀπειρῶν ἕκαστον. ταῦτα δὲ ἀδύνατα. οὔτε γὰρ ἐξ ἀπειράκις ἀπειρῶν ἐστὶ τι τῶν ὄντων (τοῦ γὰρ ἀπείρου πλεον οὐκ ἔστι, τὸ δὲ ἐκ πάντων ἐκάστου πλεον) οὔτε ἐκ τοῦ μηδενὸς συντίθεσθαι τι δυνατόν. πάν ἄρα πληθος μετέχει πη τοῦ ἐνός.

Without yet specifying its nature, as participated, essential, and so on, Proclus' purpose here is to establish that unity exists 'in some way' (πη). The proof for unity as a constitutive element is by way of *reductio*, so any other alternative as a constitutive element—either 'plurality' or 'nothing'—is impossible. The proof is broken into three parts:

- (A), something which is not one 'in any way' results in the entity being broken up into components, and each to infinity;
- (B), if any of the now-divided components is not-one, they are either 'many' or 'nothing'; and,
- (C), the absurdity shown for the components as either 'many' or 'nothing'.

Of the three parts, (C) refutes the suggestion that the divided components are simply 'many' by an appeal to the impossibility that an 'infinitely infinite' number of pluralities can compose a being, since: (1) nothing is greater than the infinite, but on the other hand (2) the whole is greater than its parts (thus, even a theoretically 'infinite' part). The only alternative against this is unity as a constitutive part, which effectively stops the regress into infinity.<sup>15</sup> The argument against an infinity of ontological parts goes back to Aristotle's *Physics*, where Aristotle disproves the notion of an actual infinity of parts in a given object.<sup>16</sup> More proximate in the background for Proclus is Plotinus' argument for unity as grounding the existence of entities with parts from *Ennead* VI.9.1, as we saw earlier. In this respect Proclus' argument for unity as an ontological

15 An interesting comparison to this lies in *PT* II.1, 5,14–17; 8,15–9,2, where it is the impossibility to *think* ontological objects that are theoretically composed of infinitely infinite pluralities that constitutes the absurdity. The latter thus establishes the *reductio* from an epistemological basis, while the *Elements*' account does so from an ontological basis.

16 Aristotle, *Phys.* III.5, esp. 204a8–29.

grounding component is not new, although his specific formulation as a proposition may be.<sup>17</sup>

For Proclus' premise that nothing can be made out of an 'infinity of infinities', one contemporary objection against this has been modern set theory, which allows for sets of varying sizes of 'infinity'. Whereas the premise in Prop. 1 assumes a common intuition that nothing exceeds the infinite, set theory allows for different sizes of infinity,<sup>18</sup> which throws into question the validity of Proclus' proof. As Ronald Hathaway notes: 'It is false that there is nothing greater than the infinite. Some infinities are greater than others. It is also false that whatever is made up of certain items is greater than any items, because an infinite set is equivalent to, not greater than, at least one of its proper subsets'.<sup>19</sup> The problem with the kind of response like Hathaway's, which uses set theory to show the failure of the proposition's applicability, is that it does not take account of Proclus' explicit limitation to the things which exist—literally, 'something among beings' (τι τῶν ὄντων)—not just the conceivability of concepts.<sup>20</sup> It would then be a question whether set theoretical claims about the different cardinalities of the infinite really apply for the realm of 'being', and not just in the case of, for instance, mathematics. Addressing this difficulty in depth would go beyond the scope of our discussion, but one response to the objection would be to test the claim of the applicability of set theory to Proclean pluralities. A mereological analysis, for instance, may find that Proclus' premise works, but the intuition of infinity may be different and not allow the

17 Cf. Dodds' commentary in Proclus (1963) 188–189. A possible, additional element in Proclus' claims about the impossibility of 'infinitely infinite' parts may be Plato, *Phil.* 26c5–d3, where Socrates claims that the class of items marked by the Unlimited still 'appeared as a unity' (ἐν ἐφάψει) due to the common character of the 'more and less'. Phrased this way, Proclus may be thinking of the theoretical parts with Plato's examples of the Unlimited in the background, filling in for the role of the parts: already they must be conceived as a kind of unity, insofar as they are seen as parts of a given ontological whole. Compare with Harte (2002) 178–194, in her analysis of the *Philebus*' Unlimited and its role in the Mixed, with her conclusion in 194: 'The unlimited components of a mixture provide the content in which structure is found, but they do not constitute anything considered on their own'.

18 See e.g. Oppy (2006) 202–203; cf. Opsomer (2013) 629.

19 Hathaway (1982) 131.

20 Cf. Opsomer (2013) 629, who also critiques Hathaway's set-theoretical analysis, especially at the level of ontology, in Proclus' context, but yet concedes: '... even so Proclus is wrong in thinking that the alternative—a plurality consisting of elements that are themselves pluralities and this ad infinitum—is inconceivable'. (Ironically, Damascius may also agree with Opsomer's judgment in regards to his principle of the All-One, which he construes as 'infinitely infinite' (ἀπειράχως ἀπειρα), i.e. in a positive, and not an impossible, sense: see below, p. 273 n.144.)

kinds of operations that are allowed in abstract sets within set theory.<sup>21</sup> In any case, the analysis of unity as a necessary ontological constituent for any given entity is one that we may grant as we see how Proclus proceeds to establishing the source of that unity.

Proclus' initial proof about unity as an ontologically constitutive element in Prop. 1 is the foundation for him to establish two further claims from Prop. 2–3 and Prop. 4: for Prop's. 2–3, that unity is a distinct property from the entity in which it inheres, so that unity must be a property that is received, or in the propositions, participated; and for Prop. 4, that the source of unification for a pluralized entity must be other than the entity itself—a 'one'-itself. Here again we see the heritage of Plotinus' arguments from *Enn.* VI.9.1 that unity is a distinct property that underlies the ontological makeup of an entity, and that it must be brought in from an outside source which has unity from itself.<sup>22</sup> Whereas Plotinus proceeds through Soul and Intellect to the One, Proclus narrows the scope to *any* kind of plurality which depends on an entity that is simply unity.

#### 4.1.2 *ET Prop. 5: the One as Unparticipated*

This brings us to Prop. 5, where Proclus shows that the One must be prior to all plurality in an absolute sense. Whereas Prop. 4 only establishes that unified plurality is other than *a* One, we are not yet shown in what sense this 'One' exists or how it stands next to the unified plurality. Prop. 5 effectively gives us a full proof for the One's existence, beginning with the first half which establishes the posteriority of plurality to the One, rather than as prior to, or on the same level with, the One.<sup>23</sup> The end of Prop. 5 raises two important types

21 In general the history of contemporary mereology could be characterized as a nominalist critique of set theory's claims on abstract objects and an attempt to find an alternative formal system: see Simons (1982), esp. 116 ff., and Harte (2002) 13–16. An analysis of these propositions in Proclus against the broader backdrop of contemporary mereology would be very fruitful and a desideratum (not addressed in Hathaway, and not fully developed in Opsomer), unfortunately beyond the purview of this work. It would be helpful to analyze further passages like these against the backdrop of recent work on Plato on mereology, as esp. Harte (2002), particularly in light of her analysis in 178–195 of the Unlimited within the Mixed in Plato's *Philebus* 23c–27e. (Although cf. Castelli (2011) for a contextualization of Harte's argument within an explicit consideration of Platonic Forms—which may be relevant while looking at Proclus' framework.)

22 Cf. p. 27–29.

23 *ET Prop. 5*, 4.19: 'Every plurality is secondary to the One'. (πάν πληθος δευτερόν ἐστι τοῦ ἐνός.) In the first half of this proposition, Proclus sets out three possibilities for the placement of the One in relation to the unified: either as subordinated to the unified, so that is as on par with the unified (or, 'together' with the One, ἅμα τῷ ἐνί); or as prior to the unified. The first two options are rendered absurd. This leaves the last as the only valid

of attribution which come out in the participation relation between the One and pluralities: being 'one' (or 'not-one') by subsistence (κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν) and by participation (κατὰ τὴν μέθεξιν). Most of the proposition is concerned with the first kind of attribution, where the conclusion by line 6,6 is that the One is prior by its subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) to plurality. But as we will see, Proclus grants that the One undergoes the condition of plurality by 'participation' (μέθεξις) if it is directly participated by plurality:

If, on the other hand, the One participates plurality, although established as 'one' by subsistence, but not-one by participation, the One will have been pluralized since the plurality is unified through the One. Therefore both the One has communicated in plurality, and the plurality in the One. But entities which are brought together and communicate in each other in some way, if they are brought together by another principle, that principle is before them; and if they bring themselves together, they are not opposed to each other—for opposed things do not hasten to each other. If then the One and plurality are contradistinguished (ἀντιδιήρηται), and the plurality as plurality is not one, while the one as one is not plurality, neither coming to be in the other, [they] will be one and two at the same time. But if something before these is that which brings together, either it is one or not-one. But if not-one, either many or nothing. Neither many, so that it is not plurality as before the one [as this was proved earlier]; nor is it nothing, for how will nothing bring [the two] together? Therefore it is only one: for this One is not many, so that it does not go into an infinite [regress]. Therefore it is the One-itself (αὐτοῦ), and every plurality is from the One-itself.

*ET Prop. 5, 6,7–21*

εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸ ἓν μετέχει πλήθους, κατὰ μὲν τὴν ὑπαρξιν ὡς ἓν ὑφεστός, κατὰ δὲ τὴν μέθεξιν οὐχ ἓν, πεπληθυσμένον ἔσται τὸ ἓν, ὥσπερ τὸ πλήθος ἡνωμένον διὰ τὸ ἓν. κεκοινωνήκεν ἄρα τό τε ἓν τῷ πλήθει καὶ τὸ πλήθος τῷ ἐνί· τὰ δὲ συνιόντα καὶ κοινωνοῦντά πῃ ἀλλήλοις εἰ μὲν ὑπ' ἄλλου συνάγεται, ἐκεῖνο πρὸ αὐτῶν ἔστιν, εἰ δὲ αὐτὰ συνάγει ἑαυτά, οὐκ ἀντίκειται ἀλλήλοις· ἀντικείμενα γὰρ οὐ σπεύδει εἰς ἀλλήλα. εἰ οὖν τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ πλήθος ἀντιδιήρηται, καὶ τὸ πλήθος ἢ πλήθος οὐχ ἓν, καὶ τὸ ἓν ἢ ἓν οὐ πλήθος, οὐδέτερον ἐν θατέρῳ γενόμενον, ἐν ἅμα

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option, where plurality must 'in every way be posterior to the One—participating the One, and not being participated by the One' (ἔσται τὸ πλήθος πάντῃ τοῦ ἐνὸς ὕστερον, μετέχον μὲν τοῦ ἐνός, οὐ μετεχόμενον δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐνός) (6,5–6). See Opsomer (2013) 630–632 for a detailed exposition of this proposition, which I agree with in large part.

καὶ δύο ἔσται. ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ ἔσται τι πρὸ αὐτῶν τὸ συνάγον, ἢ ἔν ἐστιν ἢ οὐχ ἔν. ἀλλ' εἰ οὐχ ἔν, ἢ πολλὰ ἢ οὐδέν. οὔτε δὲ πολλὰ, ἵνα μὴ πλήθος ᾖ πρὸ ἑνός· οὔτε οὐδέν· πῶς γὰρ συνάξει τὸ οὐδέν; ἔν ἄρα μόνον· οὐ γὰρ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔν πολλὰ, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἅπειρον. ἔστιν ἄρα τὸ αὐτοέν· καὶ πᾶν πλήθος ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοενός.

Proclus' analysis in these lines is initially a puzzle, since he already denies that the One participates plurality.<sup>24</sup> However this conclusion is reached without considering a case where the 'One' here is a pure unity by its mode of existence, or subsistence (*κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν*), although still participated. This should imply that the One is not affected by plurality in itself, despite being participated by plurality. On Plotinus' model of participation, for instance, the Form as directly participated encompasses all of its participants without implying internal pluralization within itself: participation in this case is non-reciprocal.<sup>25</sup> One indication where Proclus changes his view from Plotinus is in line 9, where Proclus gives the reason for the One's participation of plurality: plurality is unified *because of* (*διὰ*) the One. In other words, the explanation for plurality must be found within the cause which produces the effect of unity in plurality. The causal interaction then suggests reciprocity: if the One unifies a given pluralized entity, the latter affects the former in a certain sense—thus Proclus' statement of a mutual 'communication' (*κεκοινωνήκεν*) between the One and plurality. While this might mirror the second possibility denied in lines 4,27–6,3—equal parity between the One and plurality<sup>26</sup>—Proclus here references the causal and participatory action between the two.<sup>27</sup> Thus there is a transversal relation of properties by 'participation': the plurality is made 'one' by participation, and the One is made 'not-one' by participation, while each maintain their characteristic properties by their 'subsistence' (*ὑπαρξις*).<sup>28</sup> In this case the cause must in a certain sense *be* that which it brings about, although it is

24 Cf. the previous lines, 6,4–6 (prev. note). See also lines 4,20–26, esp.: 'For if plurality is before the One, the One participates plurality ...' which is denied in 4,25–26; also *ET* Prop. 4, 4,11–12: 'What participates unity is both one and not-one. But the One-itself is not both "one and not-one"': (τὸ δὲ μετέχον τοῦ ἑνός καὶ ἔν ἐστι καὶ οὐχ ἔν. τὸ δ' αὐτοέν οὐχὶ καὶ ἔν ἐστι καὶ οὐχ ἔν.)

25 See Strange (1992), esp. 482–484, 490.

26 The three possible outcomes in Prop. 5 for the relation between the One and plurality are: (1) plurality as prior to the One (4,20–26); (2) plurality as on par with the One (4,27–6,3); and (3) plurality as posterior to the One (6,4–6).

27 Opsomer (2013) 631 makes the same initial observation, but doesn't particularly highlight the causal interaction at play between this kind of 'One' and the plurality (lines 6,9–10) as a difference from the second option in lines 4,27–32.

28 Proclus' use of reciprocal participation is somewhat atypical, inasmuch as he usually refers to participation only from the participant's side in relation that which it



greater than its effect: in this sense Proclus affirms causal synonymy between the participated cause and its effect.<sup>29</sup> One may then see why Proclus goes on to conclude that the One must be *both* prior by its subsistence and prior to participation. In this regard Proclus highlights the issue facing Plotinus and subsequent Neoplatonists when they posit the One as participated, where for Proclus this implies internal plurality.

We also see one additional reason why Proclus places the One over the participated 'One' and plurality in the remainder of lines 6,10–21: by its priority the One 'brings together' the participated 'One' with its opposite, plurality. Although both latter entities 'communicate' in each other, neither acts on the other due to each entity's opposed character in relation to the other. A further unification then needs to happen: not only does the immanent unity of the plurality need to be brought about by the participated 'One', but the interaction between the participated 'One' and the plurality in turn needs unifying by a separate One. One might ask whether this pushes the problem one step backward, and if the One prior to the plurality and participated 'One' is itself implicated in plurality. Yet on Proclus' reasoning this does not seem to be a problem if the One is not *directly* participated by plurality: instead, another way to understand Proclus' language here would be that the One's priority gives power to the participated One to act on the plurality—something we will see in later passages on the One's relation to the henads.<sup>30</sup> On this reading, the One gives rise to the participated 'One', and through being unparticipated, as 'one' both by its subsistence and participation, it guarantees the causal action of the participated 'One' on its opposite, the plurality.

In the background to this proposition one can see the fourfold framework from Plato's *Philebus* of the Cause, Limit, Unlimited, and the Mixed: that is, the One in the role of the 'Cause' which brings together the Limit and Unlimited—in Prop. 5's case, the participated 'One' and plurality, respectively—which results in the 'Mixed', or the plurality as it has been

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participates. One possibility is that Proclus combines the two types of identity later elaborated (e.g. *ET* Prop. 103)—identity by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν) and identity by cause (κατ' αἰτίαν)—in one notion of 'participation' here. The former strictly implies passive reception of a property on the side of the effect, or participant, while the latter implies a pre-contained property in the cause which is manifested externally in the effect. Under this latter notion, the cause must in some sense *be* that which it brings about, although it is greater than its effect.

29 Cf. *ET* Prop. 65, esp. 62,15–17. On the cause as greater than its effect, see *ET* Prop. 7; cf. discussion of this earlier in 2.1.1.

30 Cf. 2.2.2.

unified.<sup>31</sup> As we will later see, Proclus takes a literal interpretation of the *Philebus* when he posits the principles of the Limit and Unlimited as the causes of Being and all intelligibles. Here we can also see Proclus re-appropriating a Neopythagorean framework of two 'Ones', between a transcendent 'One' and an immanent 'One' which acts on the Dyad to produce the number series and all subsequent kinds of beings.<sup>32</sup> Unlike Iamblichus, Proclus is careful to separate the One-itself (τὸ αὐτόεν) from any causal relation with plurality, as opposed to Iamblichus' One which pre-contains the triad, implying plurality, within itself.<sup>33</sup> This will become an issue when Proclus explains the derivation of the Unlimited (as the principle of plurality) as well as the Limit (analogous to Prop. 5's 'participated One') from the One-itself.

#### 4.1.3 *ET Prop. 6: the One's Causality Delegated to the Henads*

While Proclus shows that the One's existence is prior to plurality, both in subsistence and participation, he only gives us a hypothetical case for the secondary 'One' that is participated by plurality. We are not yet shown if or whether such a secondary principle need also exist. Prop. 6 effectively proves this, when Proclus establishes the existence of 'henads' (ἐνάδες)<sup>34</sup> as the first, participated unities after the One:

For it is clear that each of the many will not be both the same plurality only and again each [member] of this a plurality. If it is not a plurality only, truly it is either unified or a henad. And if it is something which participates unity, it is unified; and if it is that from which the first unified is, it is a henad. For if the One-itself (αὐτόεν) exists, the first participant of it is the first unified, and this is derived from henads. For if it is derived from unified entities, the unified entities are again derived from certain

31 This stands in addition to Dodds' view that the proposition is an implicit response to the 'Third Man' *aporia* in the *Parmenides* with the One's removal from plurality; see Proclus (1963) 191: 'The substance of the proposition lies in the exclusion of (c) [6,7–21] by an argument similar in principle to the 'third man' difficulty, that if the Forms are related to particulars by ὁμοιότης we must posit a cause of this relation, and then a cause which will relate this cause to the Forms, and so *ad infinitum*'. Although since the Third Man problem dealt with similarity and the identity conditions between the Form and its participant, Prop's. 1–4 already address this issue by distinguishing a One-itself from the plurality—which is enough to guarantee against the infinite regress in the Third Man.

32 Cf. p. 157 n.5.

33 Cf. p. 63–68.

34 *ET Prop. 6, 6,22*: 'Every plurality is from unified entities or from henads'. (πάν πληθος ἢ ἐξ ἡνωμένων ἔστιν ἢ ἐξ ἐνάδων.)

[other] entities, and so to infinity. It is then necessary that the first unified is derived from henads. And we have found that which is from the first principle (ἐξ ἀρχῆς).

*ET Prop. 6, 6,23–30*

ἑκαστον γὰρ τῶν πολλῶν ὅτι μὲν οὐκ ἔσται καὶ αὐτὸ πλῆθος μόνον καὶ τούτου πάλιν ἑκαστον πλῆθος, δηλόν. εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔστι πλῆθος μόνον, ἦτοι ἡνωμένον ἐστὶν ἢ ἑνάς. καὶ εἰ μὲν μετέχον τοῦ ἐνός, ἡνωμένον· εἰ δὲ ἐξ ὧν τὸ πρῶτως ἡνωμένον, ἑνάς. εἰ γὰρ ἔστι τὸ αὐτοέν, ἔστι τὸ πρῶτως αὐτοῦ μετέχον καὶ πρῶτως ἡνωμένον. τοῦτο δὲ ἐξ ἐνάδων· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡνωμένων, πάλιν τὰ ἡνωμένα ἔκ τινων, καὶ εἰς ἄπειρον. δεῖ δὴ εἶναι τὸ πρῶτως ἡνωμένον ἐξ ἐνάδων· καὶ εὖρομεν τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς.

This is the first time we see the term, ‘henad’ (ἐνάς), come up in the *Elements*, yet the context should make it immediately clear that Proclus is using the term as a stand-in for the qualified, participated ‘One’ he had in Prop. 5. The proposition demonstrates that there must be a ‘first’ entity which is not a plurality itself but rather a proximate ‘one’ as cause of unification for a given plurality. The usage of ἐνάς would then make sense, insofar as the term’s etymology generally indicates a unit or ‘one’ of a kind.<sup>35</sup> What Proclus shows here is that the first participants (μετέχοντα) of unity, or the One (collectively speaking), are *derived* from the henads, while granting that lower participants of unity may come from more unified entities—like Intellect in relation to Soul, where the former is a cause of unity for the latter although itself unified.

One can interpret Prop. 6’s claim in two ways: either (i) the first plurality after the One is made up of henads—that is, the henads *are* the first plurality; or (ii) the first plurality after the One is *from* the henads (and, in turn, subsequent pluralities from the first plurality). Dodds appears to read Prop. 6 in terms of (i) when he translates lines 6,28–29 (τοῦτο δὲ ἐξ ἐνάδων) as, ‘this first group is composed of henads’. This would make the henads the ‘first unified’ (τὸ ἡνωμένον) by their composition of it, as in a part-whole relation,<sup>36</sup> which further suggests that the first participants of the One are the *henads* rather

35 Liddell and Scott show one of the earliest usages in Plato’s *Philebus* 15a. In that case Socrates is referring to examples of ‘man as one, or ox as one, or the beautiful as one, and the good as one’, collectively referring to them as ‘unities’ (ἐνάδες) when he suggests that concern over ‘divisions of these unities’ results in controversy.

36 See, for instance, *ET Prop. 67*: ‘Every whole is either before the parts, or out of parts, or in the part’ (πᾶσα ὁλότης ἢ πρὸ τῶν μερῶν ἐστὶν ἢ ἐκ τῶν μερῶν ἢ ἐν τῷ μέρει). Here the ἐκ more clearly would suggest a whole ‘of’/‘out of’ parts.

than the unified plurality.<sup>37</sup> This interpretation, however, depends on taking *ἐκ* to mean 'of' or 'out of', as in the part-whole case, but it could also mean 'from' in the sense of derivation or source, as interpretation (ii) implies. Interpretation (i) is philosophically problematic if we consider this proposition in light of the previous Prop. 5, insofar as Proclus posits the participated 'One' as 'one' by its subsistence: in itself it does not need or imply unification as plurality does.<sup>38</sup> Further, if they are unified as a 'group', or as parts of a whole, this suggests a plurality which is unified—yet the One (τὸ αὐτόεν) is not supposed to be involved in directly unifying plurality, as such: rather, each participated 'One' is supposed to unify its given plurality, while the One in turn brings together the combination of these two terms. Philosophically speaking, interpretation (ii) is to be preferred.<sup>39</sup>

One corollary to this proposition, alongside the conclusion of Prop. 5, is that the henads do not have the same relation to the One that participants of unity have to them. The henads are not separate by their nature from the One, since they are not unified—that is, they do not receive the character of unity as the participants which are pluralized—but they are all 'one' in the same way that the One is. The difference with the henads is that they anticipate the plurality which they unify, as we saw in Prop. 5, thanks to their direct relation with the pluralities on which they act. In that sense, the henads' relation to the One does not threaten the One with plurality, since they mediate between the One and plurality as conveyers of unity, while they safeguard the One's transcendence by being simply 'one' rather than plural, as their participants. On the other hand, as we will see, Proclus differentiates between each of the henads by their unique character, whereby it is in virtue of each one's character that their different effects come about. To what degree the 'unique characters' are pre-contained in the One will need to be investigated, since this would be problematic for the One if it does not have any relation to plurality, including these 'unique characters' which implicitly distinguish each henad.

37 As Opsomer (2013) 631–632 reads this proposition.

38 An additional consideration lies in the use of the term, ἡνωμένον, which is the middle/passive, perfect form for ἐνώω. This suggests that the 'unified', or rather 'that which has been unified', must be understood as ontologically posterior to the henad which unifies it. Composition would instead suggest a part-whole relationship, which this interpretation should lock out. (Special thanks to Bethany Somma for pointing this out.)

39 I have translated the passage above with this interpretation in mind. Yet given this, interpretation (i) could still be valid inasmuch as the first plurality after the One are particular 'ones', as Opsomer (2013) 632 reads it. Yet it is then still strange that Proclus would speak of the henads as 'unified', if they are *just* units or 'ones'.

#### 4.1.4 *Putting Proclus' One in Perspective*

If we compare Proclus' approach in *ET Prop's* 5–6 with that of Plotinus (alongside Porphyry and Iamblichus), Proclus' One does something that the One for Plotinus and his successors could not do: namely, it is strictly 'one', but its causality does not imply internal plurality, since its immediate product is also simply 'one'—namely with the henads. Proclus emphasizes the transcendence of the One to the degree that he asserts its ineffability: what we would call the 'One', then, correlates with the first participated 'One' or henad, which is implicitly the Limit in *Platonic Theology* III.8.<sup>40</sup> This follows from the henads' position as intermediaries between the One and Being, which fills the place possessed by Plotinus' One. Thus the properties that one infers of the cause or causes of unity in the participants correlate directly with the henads, rather than the One. In this one may see Proclus' point that the One cannot immediately produce plurality, since its proper character, existing 'purely' (καθαρός), cannot be located otherwise.<sup>41</sup> Thus if the One is only 'one' through itself, what the One produces must be like it by its subsistence (ὑπαρξίς)—an adaptation of Proclus' strong emphasis on the principle of causal synonymy.<sup>42</sup>

Here we may recall Iamblichus in the background, where he implicitly posits two 'Ones': between an ineffable and transcendent, non-causal 'One' and a causal 'One' that produces the Limit and Unlimited.<sup>43</sup> One possible reason we

40 *PT* III.8, 32,8–15. The earlier context in 31,23–32,7 gives an interpretation of Plato's *Phil.* 23c9–10, where Socrates says that 'God has manifested (δείξαι) among beings the Limit and Unlimited' (τὸ μὲν ἄπειρον δείξαι τῶν ὄντων, τὸ δὲ πέρας). Proclus uses this to show how the Limit and Unlimited make known the otherwise-unknowable first 'god' or cause, which is the One-itself (αὐτοῦν: 31,24). Cf. Damascius, *DP* II, 2,9–11; 16,20 ff., which interprets Proclus' and Syrianus' position in the same terms of the One-itself (αὐτοῦν) as ineffable. For this reason I fail to see the argument in Gersh (2014b) 89–90 that the 'One' (as unparticipated) does not pertain to *PT* III.8's ineffable 'first god', since the identification is directly implied in 31,24—even if it is ineffable. Logically it follows that 'the One' is technically sayable only through a participated 'One', but that does not mean we cannot refer to the One *qua* unparticipated. Furthermore, Saffrey and Westerink in their commentary on *PT* III.8, 31,13 (n. 2), say that the statement on the first principle transcending the 'One' rephrases the conclusion to the first hypothesis in the *Parmenides* that the One is not 'one'. See also *PT* II.10, 65,1–7, esp. 6–7, where Being participates in the One 'as a single, ineffable cause'.

41 *PT* III.8, 31,8–10: 'For also, if it were even to produce beings (τὰ ὄντα) after the One immediately, we would in no way find the proper character (ιδιότητα) of the One in its purity'. (καὶ ἄρ' αὐτὸ καὶ εἰ τὰ ὄντα μετὰ τὸ ἐν ἀμέσως πααράγοιμεν, οὐδαμοῦ τὴν τοῦ ἐνὸς ιδιότητα καθαρῶς εὐρήσομεν.)

42 Among others, see *ET Prop.* 28; cf. p. 94–95.

43 Or at least Damascius makes this explicit in his testimonia in *DP* II, 1,5–8. Cf. p. 56, 67–68.

saw for Iamblichus' two Ones is that he attempts to secure the One's internal plurality by positing a prior principle that has no causal relation to the second 'One', all subsequent divine numbers, and all beings afterward. Proclus appears to appropriate this model from Iamblichus when he makes the unparticipated One similar to Iamblichus' first 'One', with the henads as analogous to Iamblichus' second 'One'. Yet unlike Iamblichus, Proclus emphasizes the productivity of each principle up to the first 'One' in places such as the *Parmenides Commentary*, where he says that any posited principle which has a community with beings necessarily implies production.<sup>44</sup> One also sees this in *ET Prop.* 13, where the One and Good both imply productivity: all causes which are complete (τέλειον) are also productive by their nature. As a result, the One as a paradigm of a complete cause is also by its nature productive.<sup>45</sup> In this regard Proclus does not appear to think that productivity *in itself* implies plurality: if anything, Proclus links the notion of unity directly with productivity—but only in specific cases where the producer's direct effect is a plurality, as we have seen for the henads.

#### 4.2 The One within Proclus' Causal Framework

Proclus' proof in *ET Prop.* 5 gives us the initial argument for his claim that the One is unparticipated. Now that we have considered this, alongside Proclus' proof for the henads, we should see how Proclus elaborates in what sense the One is unparticipated, and in turn how the henads convey the One's causality. Specifically we will want to see what properties and functions are shared between the One and the henads, and how the One in itself is differentiated in its causal function compared to the henads. Proclus' initial distinction between the One and the henads follows the same framework he has for other unparticipated/participated entities, like Intellect and Soul, but as we will later see he subscribes to a second causal model—the Limit and the Unlimited—parallel to the henads. To understand this, we must first see how Proclus specifically construes the One within the unparticipated/participated distinction.

*ET Prop.* 116 gives us such an initial elaboration insofar as participation determines the attributes that pertain to the henads in comparison to the One:

44 *In Parm.* 1144,3–10.

45 *ET Prop.* 25.

For it is clear that [the One] is unparticipated, so that it is not participated as becoming that which belongs to a particular entity because of this [*scil.* being participated], no longer belonging to all things in the same way by which it is the cause both of the entities before being (τῶν προό-γνων) and of beings.

That the other [gods]<sup>46</sup> are immediately participated as henads, we will make clear in the following way. For if after the First there is another henad which is unparticipated, how will it differ from the One? Either it is a unity in the same way as the latter—and yet how is one entity secondary, the other primary?—or it is not ‘one’ in the same way, then one entity is the One-itself (τὸ αὐτοέν), the other is both ‘one’ and not-‘one’. But if this entity is not a ‘not-one’ by its existence (ὑπόστασις), it will be one-only; but if it is a particular existence other than unity, then the ‘one’ will be participated by what is not-one. What is self-complete is unity, by which it is linked to the One-itself, so that once more the god, *as* a god, is this entity, while what is not-one is brought to existence as an existing ‘one’ by participation in unity. Therefore every henad after the One exists as participated, and every god is participated.

*ET Prop.* 116, 102,14–27

ὅτι μὲν γὰρ ἐκεῖνο ἀμέθεκτον, δῆλον, ἵνα μὴ μετεχόμενον καὶ τινὸς διὰ τοῦτο γενόμενον μηκέτι πάντων ὁμοίως ἢ τῶν τε προόντων καὶ τῶν ὄντων αἴτιον.

ὅτι δὲ αἱ ἄλλαι ἐνάδες μετέχονται ἤδη, δεῖξομεν οὕτως. εἰ γὰρ ἔστιν ἄλλη μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον ἀμέθεκτος ἐνός, τί διοίσει τοῦ ἐνός; ἢ γὰρ ὡσαύτως ἐν ἔστιν ὡσπερ ἐκεῖνο—καὶ πῶς τὸ μὲν δεύτερον, τὸ δὲ πρῶτον;—ἢ οὐχ ὡσαύτως, καὶ τὸ μὲν αὐτοέν, τὸ δὲ ἐν τε καὶ οὐχ ἐν. ἀλλὰ τὸ οὐχ ἐν τοῦτο εἰ μὲν μηδεμία ὑπόστασις, ἔσται μόνον ἐν· εἰ δὲ ὑπόστασις τις ἄλλη παρὰ τὸ ἐν, μετεχόμενον ἔσται τὸ ἐν ὑπὸ τοῦ οὐχ ἐνός· καὶ τὸ μὲν αὐτοτελές τὸ ἐν, ᾧ συνάπτει πρὸς τὸ αὐτοέν, ὥστε τοῦτο πάλιν ὁ θεός, ἢ θεός· τὸ δὲ οὐχ ἐν ὑποστάν ἐν μετέξει τοῦ ἐνός ὀφείσθηκε. μεθεκτὴ ἄρα ἐστὶ πᾶσα ἐνὰς μετὰ τὸ ἐν ὑποστᾶσα, καὶ πᾶς θεὸς μεθεκτός.

Here, we see the framework of *ET Prop.* 23 and 24 applied straightforwardly to the One and henads.<sup>47</sup> As in *Prop.* 23 where the unparticipated is ‘present to all

46 The proposition refers to ‘gods’, which Proclus equates to the henads in *Prop.* 113 (‘Every divine number [*scil.* the gods] is unitary’; πᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀριθμὸς ἐνιαῖός ἐστιν) and *Prop.* 114 (‘Every god is a self-complete henad, and every self-complete henad is a god’; πᾶς θεὸς ἐνὰς ἐστὶν αὐτοτελής, καὶ πᾶσα αὐτοτελής ἐνὰς θεός).

47 Cf. 2.2.



alike', so the One is posited in the same way as the cause of all things, and not just of a specific effect or set of effects, while the henads are similarly placed in the position of the participated. Just as Prop. 5 differentiated between the One-itself (τὸ αὐτοέν) and the secondary 'One', where the latter was 'one' by its subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) and 'not-one' by participation, Prop. 116 specifies that the henads are differentiated from the One by being 'not-one' in a certain manner, although they are 'one' by their existence (ὑπόστασις). The One and the henads then share the same nature as 'ones',<sup>48</sup> just as the unparticipated and participated are of the same essential kind. We see this again in the *Ten Problems Concerning Providence*, where Proclus applies the threefold distinction of κατ' αἰτίαν, καθ' ὑπαρξιν, and κατὰ μέθεξιν from *ET* Prop. 65 respectively to the One, henads, and pluralities that receive unity.<sup>49</sup> Under this schema, the participated entities are instantiations of the monad of a given order, as one can see in *ET* Prop. 21,<sup>50</sup> while the monad is the first cause for the series of instantiations. Proclus here follows the same formula for the One and the henads, although as we will see in Section 4.3, this formula will need to be modified in certain crucial ways, since both the One and the henads are equally 'one' and beyond being.

One remaining question concerning the One is how it differs as an unparticipated cause from, for instance, unparticipated Intellect or Soul. Although both cases involve detachment from their particular participants, unparticipated causes within the domain of being anticipate the lower orders of beings. We see this in Proclus' application of the principle that 'all things are in all things' to the principles of Being, Life, and Intellect, where Being, for example, is identified with Life and Intellect by its causality (κατ' αἰτίαν), while by its own subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν) it is neither.<sup>51</sup> By contrast, this aspect is precisely what Proclus wants to reject for the One if it transcends plurality,

48 See esp. *ET* Prop. 113, 100,6–9: 'For if the divine number has the One preceding as cause, just as the intellective [number has] Intellect, and the psychical [number has] Soul, and everywhere the plurality is analogous to the cause, it is clear that the divine number is of the character of unity, if the One is indeed god' (εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμὸς αἰτίαν ἔχει προηγουμένην τὸ ἓν, ὡς ὁ νοερός τὸν νοῦν καὶ ὁ ψυχικός τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ ἔστιν ἀνάλογον τὸ πλῆθος πανταχοῦ πρὸς τὴν αἰτίαν, δῆλον δὴ ὅτι καὶ ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμὸς ἐν αἰδίῳ ἐστίν, εἴπερ τὸ ἓν θεός).

49 *De Decem Dub.* 63,5–12. Cf. discussion of this passage in p. 110–111.

50 Cf. discussion in p. 100–101, including n. 94.

51 *ET* Prop. 103, esp. 92,17–24. Cf. *In Parm.* 627,21–26, where Proclus references the co-inherence of the three 'levels' of being (possibly correlating to Being, Life, Intellect), with the second in the first and third in the second κατ' αἰτίαν. The heritage of the principle, 'all things are in all', we have already seen in Porphyry, *Sent.* 10 in p. 44–45.

as we saw in Prop. 5. We see this brought out when Proclus distinguishes between three kinds of procession in the *Parmenides Commentary*: by similarity (καθ' ὁμοιότητα), by sameness (κατὰ ταυτότητα), and by 'unity' (καθ' ἑνωσιν).<sup>52</sup> Whereas the first two apply to the unparticipated producing either participated entities (for 'sameness') or generating lower levels, as Being producing Intellect, or Intellect producing Soul (for 'similarity'), procession by unity implies no sameness or identity of kind between the One and the henads. Thus the henads have the 'same' nature as the One, but their unity also implies no relation of identity (or difference, also) between the One as their cause and themselves. Although perhaps subtle, the distinction is significant for the One's causal position compared to other unparticipated causes within being. We will return to this issue below in Section 4.3.2, when we discuss the henads.

#### 4.2.1 *Proclus' Causal Model in Response to the Plotinian Model*

We get a fuller view of the One's causality in the critical responses Proclus gives to his predecessors in the *Parmenides Commentary*. Although he does not name the specific figures behind the different positions he addresses, Proclus primarily tends to address either Iamblichus or Porphyry,<sup>53</sup> although Plotinus often also lies behind one or both figures. We have already reviewed the main points behind each figure's position in Chapter 1,<sup>54</sup> however one particular point concerns us. We may recall Proclus describing the view of certain 'commentators'—chiefly Iamblichus among others—who construe the One as pre-containing within itself the causes of all things above the principles of Being, Life, and Intellect, as the 'first whole-itself before wholes' (τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοόλον πρὸ ὅλων) which is in no need of the parts in the wholes after it.<sup>55</sup> Before he describes this view, Proclus previously established that wholes imply dependence on their parts, both for the whole composed of parts and for the whole *in* the parts, as well as even for the 'whole before parts' which contains 'the causes of the parts' (τὰς αἰτίας τῶν μερῶν).<sup>56</sup> Even though the whole before parts is simpler in that it is not divisible into already-existent parts, as for a whole of parts, the whole still implies in itself the formula that becomes the

52 *In Parm.* 745,14–17. Discussed below in p. 193–195.

53 See Dillon (1988) for a survey of passages in the *In Parm.* where Proclus seems to address Porphyry and/or Iamblichus.

54 On Porphyry, see p. 41–55; on Iamblichus, see p. 55–69.

55 *In Parm.* 1107,8–22. See the analysis of this passage in p. 65–67.

56 *In Parm.* 1102,7–22. Cf. *ET* Prop. 67.

whole that is composed of divisible parts. Thus, even as ‘before’ the parts, the whole contains an incipient multiplicity.<sup>57</sup>

Ultimately this only pushes the issue one step backward for Proclus, since the ‘whole before wholes’ in the end becomes a variation of the same model of the ‘whole before parts’ within the intelligible realm.<sup>58</sup> We see this when Proclus shows that such a view of the One places the same number of intelligible causes within the One as after it:

57 One might object that this sort of problematic is not found in the confines of the *Elements of Theology*: inasmuch as the One is unparticipated, one would think by the logic of Prop’s. 66–69 that the One *should* fit the position of the ‘whole before parts’, since the latter tier correlates with the unparticipated (implicit from Prop. 64, esp. 62,5–12). Following Prop. 67, the henads would then fit the second tier of the ‘whole of parts’ (ὅλης ἐκ τῶν μερῶν), encompassing beings which would analogously fit the third tier of the ‘whole in the parts’ (ὅλης ἐν τῷ μέρει). However given that *In Parm.* 1107,16–28, and other passages deny that the One is all things in its causality (κατ’ αἰτίαν) (see below, including n. 63), Proclus seems to deny explicitly this sort of conception. One might think that Proclus ‘develops’ his views between the *Elements* and *In Parm.*, and/or has left this premise unspoken in the *Elements*—namely that the ‘whole before parts’ still implies the plurality manifested in the ‘whole of/in the parts’, and must be qualified or negated for the One. One premise that must be verified is in what sense the henads can be considered ‘wholes of parts’: since they are ‘one’ by subsistence (καθ’ ὑπάρξιν), they cannot be composed like beings (ὄντα) which subsist as pluralities (cf. Prop’s. 113, 114, 118). Consequently they must be solely ‘wholes before parts’, since they are the first principles of their respective orders of beings (cf. Prop’s. 121–122). From this inference, even within the *Elements*, the One’s relation to the henads cannot be in the same sense as the relation of the ‘whole before parts’ to the ‘whole of parts’ for subordinate principles in the realm of Being. (And it is this sense which Proclus attacks with the ‘whole before wholes’, to the degree that this mimics the aforementioned ‘whole before parts’ relation.) That Proclus does not clarify issues like this in the *Elements* is mystifying: although the ‘whole before parts’ and ‘whole of parts’ may apply *by analogy* to the One and the henads, the *content* behind these terms changes, depending on the kind of principles to which the terms are applied. Issues such as this may reflect the limitations in scope for the *Elements* (for instance, as a *more geometrico* work, mirroring the soul’s discursive mode of knowledge, in contrast to the insights derived from revelation or from the Platonic texts which merit ‘tweaking’ the *Elements*’ structure: see Martijn and Gerson (2017) 50–51, 61–65) in contrast to other treatises like the *In Parm.*, rather than a ‘developmentalist’ account for the difference between the texts. For now this should be enough to maintain that the *Elements* can be read together with other treatises, like the *In Parm.*, however with caution for issues like this. (Special thanks to Evan King for provoking this important question.)

58 *In Parm.* 1107,16–28. Proclus specifically refers to this categorization of ‘whole of wholes’ to the ‘middle rank of intelligibles’ (τῇ μέσῃ τάξει τῶν νοητῶν) (1107,26–27), which he claims he will show, but it appears this discussion lies in the now-lost commentary on the second hypothesis. (An initial word search in the TLG turns up no other reference to this phrase.)

But if we place the unknowable causes of all things in the One, ascending not only from Intellect, Life, and Being, but also from each of the [true] beings (τῶν ὄντων), such as Beauty, Virtue, Justice, and each of the others, the One will be as many things in plurality as Intellect. And it would in no way yet be one, and thus we would inadvertently double the beings: for there will be the beings themselves and their causes subsisting in the One, and in the case of these we would enquire how, being many, they become unified (ἡγνῶται), and will necessarily postulate that there is a One prior to these, and either we will preserve it as One in the proper sense and remove all things from it, or once again we will place all things in it, and we will be tripling the beings, and thus proceed to infinity without ever making a stand anywhere, holding that the One also contains the range [of beings].<sup>59</sup> This is indeed what certain friends of Plato ventured to assert, even though every range demands something else to give unification (ἔνωσιν) to the range, or if there is no such thing, the range [of beings] which has unification brought in from outside, will not be sufficient to count as first because of the lack of unification.

*In Parm.* 1107,29–1108,15<sup>60</sup>

εἰ δὲ καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀπὸ νοῦ καὶ ζωῆς καὶ ὄντος ἀνιόντες πάντων τὰς ἀγνώστους αἰτίας ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ θήσομεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀφ' ἐκάστου τῶν ὄντων, οἷον κάλλους, ἀρετῆς, δικαίου, τῶν ἄλλων ἐκάστου, τοσαῦτα ἔσται τῷ πλήθει τὸ ἐν ὁπόσα καὶ ὁ νοῦς, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἔτι εἴη οὐδαμῶς ἐν, καὶ οὕτω λάθοιμεν ἂν διπλασιάσαντες τὰ ὄντα· αὐτὰ τε γὰρ ἔσται καὶ τὰ αἷτια αὐτῶν τὰ ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ ὑπάρχοντα, καὶ περὶ τούτων ζητήσομεν πῶς πολλὰ ὄντα ἡγνῶται, καὶ ἀναγκάσομεν εἶναι καὶ πρὸ τούτων ἐν, καὶ ἢ κυρίως ἐν αὐτὸ φυλάττοντες πάντα ἀφαιρήσομεν, ἢ πάλιν ἐν ἐκείνῳ πάντα θησόμεθα, καὶ τριπλασιάσομεν τὰ ὄντα καὶ οὕτως ἐπ' ἄπειρον ἀνιόντες οὐκέτι που στησόμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς λέγοντες πλάτος ἔχειν καὶ τὸ ἐν. ὅπερ ἤδη τινὲς τῶν Πλάτωνος φίλων ἐτόλμησαν λέγειν, καίτοι παντὸς πλάτους ἀπαιτοῦντος ἄλλο τι τῷ πλάτει τὴν ἔνωσιν διδόν ἢ, μηδενὸς ὄντος τοιούτου, τὸ πλάτος ἐπέισακτον ἔχον ἔνωσιν ἔσται πρῶτον οὐκ αὐταρκες διὰ τὴν ἐνώσεως ἔνδειαν.

59 The Cousin ed. originally had πλήθους ('plurality'), while Steel reverts to the ASg manuscript group for πλάτος ('plane' or 'range'). Steel's change seems initially perplexing philosophically, since plurality in the One, and not just the 'range of beings' in the One, is the main issue at stake—which Cousin's word choice captures better. Nevertheless I follow Steel for the manuscript witness: the 'plane' of beings still suggests the effective problem of plurality that Proclus addresses at this point.

60 A similar argument is made in *PT* 111.8, 31,8–10: cf. p. 169 n.41.

Proclus' objection here is that, if the One is the direct cause of Being, Life, and Intellect in themselves, then it will pre-contain the same number of causes that are implied within each of the three principles.<sup>61</sup> In this regard Proclus employs the same 'Third Man' regress argument used for proving the existence of unity in *ET* Prop. 1, and it is again implicitly referenced when he posits the One-itself (τὸ αὐτοέν) prior to the participated 'One' in *ET* Prop. 5.<sup>62</sup> There are two ways to read Proclus' response: one is that the One is posited as a whole that contains 'wholes'—i.e. Being, Life, and Intellect. So if the One contains these, it implies the same three causes that correspond to the three 'wholes', each of which results in plurality. A second reading would account for the causes *within* each of the three principles—as with 'Beauty, Virtue, Justice, and each of the others'—so that if the One is a 'whole of wholes', the parts that are contained within their respective wholes carry over by transversal to the One itself: yet this again results in plurality. In both cases Proclus reads the One of the 'commentators' as having a κατ' αἰτίαν identity with the three principles of Being, Life, and Intellect. We saw this in Porphyry's *Sententia* 10 where the principle, 'all things are in all', is applied at all levels up to the One. Yet this application to the One is the very thing Proclus wants to deny to secure the One's unity when he speaks of removing all things (πάντα ἀφαιρήσμεν) from the One. In this respect Proclus denies any κατ' αἰτίαν identity of the One with all things<sup>63</sup>—paradoxically as the One is also called the cause of all things.<sup>64</sup>

61 This objection follows a more specific critique Proclus gives earlier in *In Parm.* 1107,24–26: even though the 'whole of wholes' is more encompassing than simple wholes and has a 'form of unity' (ἐνοειδῶς), unity in itself transcends wholeness.

62 Cf. commentary in Proclus (1963) 191.

63 On doing a TLG search I only find one instance in Proclus where κατ' αἰτίαν is applied to the One: *In Parm.* 621,8–11: 'Thus in the end Zeno espoused the teaching of his father Parmenides, seeing that plurality is in the One by its causality (κατ' αἰτίαν), while the One cannot be preserved in plurality alone: for this exists in itself before plurality, and plurality is what it is entirely from the One' (trans. Dillon/Morrow, modified). (ὥστε καὶ αὐτὸς τελευτῶν τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς Παρμενίδου λόγον ἡσπάζετο, τὸ μὲν πλῆθος ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ κατ' αἰτίαν ὁρῶν, τὸ δὲ ἐν ἐν μόνῳ τῷ πλήθει σφῆζειν οὐ δυνάμενος· τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ καὶ καθ' αὐτὸ πρὸ τοῦ πλῆθους ἔστιν, ἐκεῖνο δὲ πάντως ἐκ τοῦ ἐνός ἐστιν ὃ ἐστιν.) Because of the introductory context, Proclus is referring to 'One' in a general sense here, and even when he applies κατ' αἰτίαν to the One it is only from the perspective plurality as a participant—therefore implicitly this must be *participated* unity.

64 E.g. *PT* 11.1, 3,7–8; 11.2, 23,9–12; *ET* Prop. 12, 14,22–23; and esp. Prop. 116, 102,14–16, discussed earlier. As we will later see in Ch. 5, this becomes a significant issue for Damascius, where as the cause of all things the One *is* all things, in contrast to Proclus where the One as cause of all things *is not* all things.

As mentioned in Chapter 1,<sup>65</sup> while the immediate target of this passage appears to be Iamblichus, especially with the language of 'wholes of wholes', Proclus is ultimately addressing the general Plotinian picture of the One pre-containing or anticipating the different aspects of Intellect and the intelligible realm.<sup>66</sup> As we have seen in Syrianus and Proclus until now, both figures wish to settle this tension by separating the One from plurality in the sense of pre-containing or anticipating plurality. Thus in the above critique of 'hidden' causes in the One, Proclus wants to maintain the unique character of the One that is 'nothing else but one', which Plotinus' and Porphyry's positions would fail to do. In this we can see Proclus' axiom from *ET* Prop. 28 that every cause produces what is like itself rather than what is unlike or dissimilar.<sup>67</sup> In application to the One, the One must produce what is like itself—in this case the henads—before what is unlike itself—with the principles Being, Life, and Intellect.

In turn, Proclus does not get rid of Plotinus' model entirely. While denying that the One contains the 'paradigms of paradigms', Proclus ends up subsuming the 'hidden' characteristics of Plotinus' One into the henads.<sup>68</sup> One can already see this implied, again, from *ET* Prop. 5, where the participated 'One' receives communication from the multiplicity with which it also communicates. Although 'one' by its subsistence (ὑπαρξίς), a given henad anticipates its effects insofar as it is participated and, in turn, conveys unity to that effect. So whereas Proclus denies κατ' αἰτίαν identity to the One with its effects, he affirms this kind of identity for the henads. Insofar as the number of henads is the same with the number of intelligibles,<sup>69</sup> the criticism that 'the One

65 See 1.3.

66 Cf. p. 65 n.138.

67 Cf. p. 37–38.

68 See, e.g., *ET* Prop. 121, where the standard three characteristics of subsistence (ὑπαρξίς), power (δύναμις), and knowledge (γνώσις) (in other contexts, intellect (νοῦς) or activity (ἐνέργεια)) are also applied to the henads, but according to their internal mode of unity. Thus where all beings have internal differentiations of these three characteristics, the henads have no differentiation but still 'hiddenly' have these three characteristics as internal, unified paradigms. Here I follow the interpretation of D'Ancona Costa (1992) 289–290, where she traces a number of causal features found in Plotinus' One to the henads.

69 *ET* Prop. 135, 120,3–4: 'As many participated henads as there are, so many also are the participated genera of beings'. (καὶ ὅσαι αἱ μετεχόμεναι ἑνάδες, τοσαῦτα καὶ τὰ μετέχοντα γένη τῶν ὄντων.) However, as Dodds points out in Proclus (1963) 271, this is an exception to the general rule from Prop. 62 that the lower order is always more numerous than the higher. Also as Dodds indicates in 272, it is unclear what γένη is restricted to—as he says, these γένη must be distinct from the kinds mentioned in Prop's. 144–145. For a discussion of this difference, see Butler (2008a) 106 ff.

will be equal in multiplicity to Intellect' becomes affirmed for the henads. By delegating the responsibility of direct causality to the henads, Proclus can then maintain the One's independence from the paradigmatic causes which characterize the lower levels, while the henads convey unity and the implicit plurality that they anticipate in the lower effects. In this sense Proclus agrees with Plotinus that the 'One'—as a henad—must prefigure Being itself in an analogical sense. We will see this elaborated more in the next two sections (4.3 and 4.4).

#### 4.2.2 *The One's Causality Indicated in Negations*

Before we move on to the One's participated causality with the henads, we should briefly discuss two points: how Proclus construes the One's causality of the henads in terms of negations, and how Proclus relates the causation of matter to the One. This last issue initially seems to break the causal rule we have just stated, that the One is *only* causally responsible for the henads. Both issues are ultimately related, since the negative nature of matter, through privation of all form, is paralleled in the negations that apply to the One in its transcendence.

As we saw in Proclus' critique from the last section, the One's position as the first cause is secured only when we 'remove all things' (πάντα ἀφαιρήσομεν) from it. However removing all things does not mean we take away causality from it,<sup>70</sup> and that we make it into what is 'nothing' or non-existent.<sup>71</sup> Instead, negation indicates causality at the lower levels:

Everything then which is negated of the One proceeds from it. For it is necessary that it not be among all things, in order that all things may derive from it. Because of this it seems to me that Parmenides often denies opposite things of it, for instance that it is neither whole nor part, neither same nor different, neither at rest nor in motion. For the One

<sup>70</sup> Although compare with *PT* 11.9, 58,19–24, where the One is 'hymned' as a 'cause in an non-causal way' (ἀναιτίως αἷτιον). I take this phrase to mean that, since the One does not directly cause beings/plurality, it does not have the attributes that pertain to being, like 'cause'. Yet because it derives the henads that produce causes, it is 'hymned' and so called by analogy.

<sup>71</sup> *In Parm.* 1105,25–29: 'But I see here much noise being stirred up by those who think that these negations lead us into the absolute non-existent (τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν) or some such thing, since because of the lack of definition our imagination does not have a particular definite thing to grasp onto' (πολὺν δὲ ἐνταῦθα καθορώ μοι θόρυβον ἐγειρόμενον τῶν οἰηθέντων τὰς ἀποφάσεις ταύτας εἰς τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν ἀπάγειν ἡμᾶς ἢ ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον διὰ τὴν ἀοριστίαν τῆς ἡμετέρας φαντασίας οὐκ ἐχούσης ὠρισμένου τινὸς ἀντιλαβέσθαι πράγματος).



has transcended everything that is in opposition and every relation in its simplicity, [and] it is pure of every duality, being itself the cause of every plurality, of two-fold series [of opposites], of the first duality, of every relation, and of every opposition.

*In Parm.* 1076,23–1077,3

πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἀποφάσκει τοῦ ἑνός, ἐξ αὐτοῦ πρόεισι· δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸ μηδὲν εἶναι τῶν πάντων, ἵνα ᾗ πάντα ἅπ' αὐτοῦ. διό μοι δοκεῖ πολλάκις καὶ τὰ ἀντικείμενα ἀποφάσκειν, οἷον ὅτι οὔτε ὅλον οὔτε μέρος, οὔτε ταῦτόν οὔτε ἕτερον, οὔτε ἐστὼς οὔτε κινούμενον· πάσης γὰρ ἐξήρηται τὸ ἐν ἀντιθέσεως, πάσης ὑπερῆ-πλωται σχέσεως, πάσης δυάδος καθαρεύει, παντὸς πλήθους αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν συ-στοίχων τῶν διττῶν αἴτιον ὃν καὶ τῆς πρώτης δυάδος καὶ πάσης σχέσεως καὶ πάσης ἀντιθέσεως.

Here we see that what is negated of the One in itself is correlated with the effect's existence after it: for instance, the One transcends the whole/part distinction, while the whole/part distinction is manifested after the One. For this Proclus refers to Syrianus' interpretation of the first and second hypotheses in the *Parmenides*, where the negations applied to the One in the first hypothesis are correlated with the affirmations of the 'One' in the second.<sup>72</sup> The negations are 'generative' insofar as they collectively indicate the transcendence of the One over the attributes or entities affirmed of the second 'One' afterward. This is brought out one page earlier where Proclus compares the One's transcendence by negation to the other lower entities of intellect and soul as causative by their transcendence:

But it is useful to state my opinion in brief, I would say that even as the One is the cause of wholes, so also negations are the causes of affirmations. For this reason, as many things as the second hypothesis asserts, as we have said earlier, the first denies such things: for all those positive assertions proceed from these negations, and the cause of all these is the One, as being prior to all things. For just as the soul, being bodiless, produces the body, and as the intellect, even though unsouled (since it is also not a soul) brings to existence the soul, even so the One, while not being itself pluralized, brings to existence every plurality; and although it is not number, [it brings to existence] number; and though it is not shape, [it brings to existence] shape (σχῆμα), and similarly in the case of the others.

<sup>72</sup> *In Parm.* 1062,10–1062,17. Cf. p. 70–72.

For it is none of the things belonging to which it brings to existence, since no other cause is the same as its own products.

*In Parm.* 1075,13–24

ἀλλ' εἴ με χρή συντόμως εἰπεῖν τὸ δοκοῦν· ὥσπερ τὸ ἐν αἰτίον ἐστι τῶν ὄλων, οὕτω καὶ ἀποφάσεις αἰτίαι τῶν καταφάσεων εἰσιν. ὅθεν καὶ ὅσα κατέφησεν ἢ δευτέρᾳ, καθὰ προείπομεν, ὑπόθεσις, τοσαῦτα ἀπέφησεν ἢ πρώτῃ· πάντα γὰρ τὰ καταφατικά ἐκεῖνα πρόεισιν ἐκ τούτων τῶν ἀποφατικῶν, καὶ πάντων αἰτίον τὸ ἐν, ὡς πρὸ τῶν πάντων ὄν· ὡς γὰρ ἀσώματος οὐσα ἢ ψυχὴ τὸ σῶμα παρήγαγεν, ὡς ὁ νοῦς οἶον ἄψυχος ὢν, ὅτι καὶ μὴ ἔστι ψυχὴ, τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπέστησεν, οὕτω τὸ ἐν ἀπλήθυντον ὄν πᾶν τὸ πλήθος ὑπέστησε, καὶ ἀνάριθμον ὄν τὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον ὄν τὸ σχῆμα, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὁμοίως· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ὢν ὑφίστησιν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλο αἰτίον οὐδὲν ταῦτόν ἐστιν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ γεννήμασιν.

By giving examples of specific entities like soul producing body, and intellect producing soul, Proclus shows how an analogy for causation exists for the One, so that the concern of those who worry about the One being characterized *entirely* by negations is mitigated. In giving this response Proclus also addresses an apparently prevalent view (although he again does not specify to whom this belongs) that giving a definition which involves positive affirmations is superior to one that involves negations.<sup>73</sup> Thus for the One, since no positive attribution can be given to it, even in the 'hidden' way earlier, Proclus tries to show that a negative definition of the One still gives it a causal indication: by

73 *In Parm.* 1072,14–17: 'It would seem for all that assertion is more worthy than negation. A negation, after all, is a privation, while an assertion, they say, involves the presence, and a particular possession, of form'. (δοκεῖ γὰρ πᾶσιν ἢ κατάφασις σεμνοτέρα τῆς ἀποφάσεως εἶναι· στέρησις γοῦν ἢ ἀπόφασις· ἢ δὲ κατάφασις, φασίν, εἶδους παρουσία καὶ ἕξις τίς ἐστιν.) Cf. *In Parm.* 1073,2–7 (quoted in p. 291 n.202). While he gives no names, Proclus could have in mind Aristotle, who critiques the use of negations for the definitions of forms in *Topics* VI.6, 143b1–34, and *Parts of Animals* I.3, 642b22–643a6. On this view, negation does not imply superiority, as indicative of a genus for instance. Aristotle's point is that negation only indicates either a privation of the proper function of a nature—e.g. being blind—or a species-making difference—e.g. length as indicating what is without breadth, which is differentiated from length with breadth: both length without/with breadth fall under the genus, 'length'. See Deslauriers (2007) 27–29 for further discussion of these passages. Porphyry, *In Cat.* 136,24–27, also mentions 'certain figures' (τινες) who held that the Aristotelian category of ἕξις ('state' or 'possession') 'had to be spoken of in positive terms, and privations in negative terms' (τὰς γὰρ ἕξεις καταφατικῶς δεῖν προσαγορεύειν, τὰς δὲ στερήσεις ἀρνητικῶς). Cf. Syrianus, *In Met.* 34,32 ff., on the relation of privation and defining species-making differences. Many thanks to Gary Gabor for these references.

denying all attributes of the One, it indicates the One as the source for all the affirmations that come forth after it in Being.

In this regard the henads' correlation with each of the negations in the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis becomes significant, since they constitute the 'link' between the One—where negations apply—and Being—where affirmations apply.<sup>74</sup> Each henad corresponds with a specific negation from the first hypothesis, although the henads are ultimately placed within the second hypothesis as anticipating the affirmations which belong to beings. Thus we find an additional fact about the henads: not only do they convey the One's unity to pluralities, but they also convey the specific property, which is denied of the One, to each particular kind of being. In this sense if the One's negations are 'productive', this productivity is represented by the henads which directly bring about the effect in the participants.

#### 4.2.3 *The One and Matter*

So far we have seen two points made about the One: it is only responsible as a direct cause of the henads, following the principle of *ET* Prop. 28; and negations, as the only kind of predication allowed, indicate the mode of the One's causality. Given these points, one might initially think that the One is only responsible for producing the entities which are the next level below it, as in Plotinus for the One's production of Intellect (as opposed to, for instance, Soul). However, we should note passages where Proclus appears to ascribe the productivity of prime matter directly to the One—which initially seems to conflict with what we have just said, that the One only produces the henads. One can see this claim in the conclusion of *ET* Prop. 72:

From these things it is clear that matter, as brought to existence from the One, is devoid of form through itself; and body by itself, if it also participates Being, does not participate Soul. For matter, as the substrate of all things, proceeded from the cause of all things, and body, which is the substrate for animation (τῆς ψυχώσεως), is brought to existence from what is more whole than Soul, in which way it is a participant of Being.

*ET* Prop. 72, 68,24–29

ἐκ δὴ τούτων φανερόν διότι ἡ μὲν ὕλη, ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ὑποστᾶσα, καθ' αὐτὴν εἶδους ἐστὶν ἄμοιρος· τὸ δὲ σῶμα καθ' αὐτό, εἰ καὶ τοῦ ὄντος μετέσχε, ψυχῆς ἀμέτοχόν

74 For this position, Proclus follows Syrianus' interpretation of the henads as fitting in the *Parmenides*' second hypothesis. See *In Parm.* 1062,14–1063,1. Cf. p. 69–72.

ἐστίν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὕλη, ὑποκείμενον οὖσα πάντων, ἐκ τοῦ πάντων αἰτίου προήλθε· τὸ δὲ σῶμα, ὑποκείμενον ὃν τῆς ψυχώσεως, ἐκ τοῦ ὀλιχωτέρου τῆς ψυχῆς ὑφέστηκε, τοῦ ὄντος ὁπωσοῦν μετασχόν.

Proclus concludes with the One's generation of matter on the basis of the earlier Prop. 60, where causes which bring about a greater range of effects are superior to those which bring about a more limited range of effects.<sup>75</sup> For instance, that the principle, Being, is greater than Intellect can be seen from the level of their effects, where body, taken generically (correlating with Being), is greater in number than the subset of bodies which possess reason (correlating with Intellect). Prop. 72 then shows the inverse of this premise: that properties which are more prior to others in beings, like matter in relation to body, come from higher causes. In this respect Proclus applies the principle of synonymy from Prop. 28 one step further: not only do principles like Intellect produce particular intellects, but they also produce a lower correlate effect, such as the property, 'rationality', immanently within a given soul, or in turn in an ensouled body.<sup>76</sup>

One might initially interpret this principle to mean that the immanent property is produced *immediately* after both the unparticipated cause and the participated entities from that cause, by contrast to matter which is produced *below* the beings produced after the One. One may think this when looking at the corollary to *ET* Prop. 64, where Proclus establishes this principle for unparticipated and participated causes,<sup>77</sup> and applies it to the case of the One and the henads: 'From these things it is clear that self-complete henads have proceeded from the One, and so also irradiations (ἐλλάμψεις) of unification'.<sup>78</sup> As the henads' primary participants, the intelligibles would be the first candidates to receive this second sense of unity as an immanent character or 'irradiation'.<sup>79</sup> The lower levels of beings would then receive unity through the mediation of other principles, like the intelligibles (or Being), or for Soul, for instance, by mediation from Intellect and the henads pertaining to Intellect.<sup>80</sup>

75 *ET* Prop. 60, 58,3–5.

76 *ET* Prop. 64, 62,6–7.

77 *ET* Prop. 64, 60,20–22: 'Every monad that is a principle brings to existence a two-fold number: one of self-complete existences, the other of irradiations which acquire existence in other entities'. (πάσα ἀρχικὴ μονὰς διττὸν ὑφίστησιν ἀριθμόν, τὸν μὲν αὐτοτελῶν ὑποστάσεων, τὸν δὲ ἐλλάμψεων ἐν ἑτέροις τὴν ὑπόστασιν κεκτημένων.)

78 62,5–6: ἐκ δὴ τούτων φανερόν ὅτι καὶ ἑνάδες αἱ μὲν αὐτοτελεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνὸς προήλθον, αἱ δὲ ἐλλάμψεις ἐνώσεων.

79 See e.g. *ET* Prop. 135.

80 *ET* Prop. 128, 1–3: 'Every god, when participated by entities of an order relatively near to it, is participated immediately; when by those more remote, through certain mediate

This would contrast with the version of causality we see above, with each cause producing its respective substrate, from the bottom as it were, *as well as* its effect produced from the top downward.

Yet as Prop. 72 proves, Proclus adds a second factor in causality: each cause gives rise to the two kinds of participated entities, as above, *and* each also generates a corresponding substrate upon which lower causes bring about their own effect.<sup>81</sup> Thus while the One brings about Being, it brings about the substrate (i.e. prime matter) upon which Being brings about its own effect (i.e. bodies). This second causal model reflects a shift away from Plotinus, for whom each principle of being is produced by its prior alone: body and matter, for instance, are produced by Soul, while Soul is in turn produced by Intellect, and finally Intellect by the One.<sup>82</sup> The One's effect is produced down to the lowest levels solely by mediation of Intellect and Soul, while matter reflects the last product of the One's causality insofar as it is pure privation, and in that respect entirely devoid of unity.<sup>83</sup> Although Proclus keeps this derivational model in place, he supplements it by making each principle productive of a correlating substrate.<sup>84</sup> As seen above, the descending gradation of effects illustrates the principle Proclus draws from Prop. 72, where higher causes like Being produce bodies (in addition to the participated property, 'being', in Life and Intellect), while Life produces only the effect of 'living' in a specific range of those bodies (in addition to 'life' in Intellect), and in turn Intellect produces the effect of 'rationality' in a specific range of living bodies (in addition to participated intellects correlating to souls).<sup>85</sup> Thus in the case of matter, Proclus indicates the One as its cause, rather than Being or Intellect, since it is the first substrate which corresponds to the first cause,

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entities, or more diminishing entities, or a greater number of entities'. (πᾶς θεός, ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν ἐγγυτέρω μετεχόμενος, ἀμέσως μετέχεται· ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν πορρωτέρω, διὰ μέσων ἢ ἐλαττόνων ἢ πλειόνων τινῶν.)

81 *ET* Prop. 72, 68,17–18: 'All that which has the account of being a substrate in the participants proceeds from more complete and more universal causes'. (πάντα τὰ ἐν τοῖς μετέχουσιν ὑποκειμένων ἔχοντα λόγον ἐκ τελειοτέρων πρόβεισι καὶ ὀλικωτέρων αἰτίων.)

82 See e.g. Plotinus, *Enn.* v.4.1, 1–5. As Van Riel (2001a) 132 points out, Plotinus explicitly denies direct production of subsequent lower levels (like Soul, or matter) by the One, but rather their derivation by mediated steps.

83 For an account of Plotinus' derivational structure, see Van Riel (2001a) 129–138.

84 This of course is only scratching the surface of Proclus' theory of substrates in relation to prime matter, the ultimate substrate. For a thorough account of Proclus' framework of matter and the multiple levels of substrates from different principles, see Van Riel (2009), esp. 240–254.

85 Cf. *ET* Prop. 62, 58,30–32.

and it also lacks determination or form, characters which otherwise belong properly to Intellect.<sup>86</sup>

Yet to return to the issue at hand, we are still faced with an aporetic impasse over the One's direct causality of matter: the difficulty is that this suggests that the One is participated, yet the One should be unparticipated. Furthermore, if the One produces matter, plurality would seem to be implied, especially if matter lacks unity by definition. Given this, there are certain passages that partially assuage this tension, when Proclus specifies either the One in its unlimited aspect as the cause of matter, or the principle of the Unlimited below the One. We see this in the *Timaeus Commentary* where Proclus links matter to the principles of the Limit and Unlimited and specifies the Unlimited, alongside the One, as the cause of matter:

But since Plato everywhere brings to existence (ὑφίστησιν) the [properties] in sensible things which correspond to the intelligible causes from those [causes] [...] he also produces the unlimitedness (ἀπειρίαν) here below from the First Unlimitedness in the same way as he produces the limit here below from Limit there above. And it has been shown elsewhere that [Plato] placed the First Unlimitedness—the [unlimitedness] which is before the mixed—at the summit of the intelligibles and extends its irradiation from that point all the way to the lowest [reaches of being]. And so, according to [Plato], matter proceeds both from the One and from the Unlimitedness which is prior to one Being, and if you wish, also from the One-Being, inasmuch as it is potential being. Hence it is 'good' of a sort: without limit, formless, and the most indistinct [grade of] being.<sup>87</sup> Thus [it is] these prior to the Forms and their manifestation.

*In Tim.* 1, 485,3–5; 7–17

ἐπειδὴ δὲ πανταχοῦ τὰ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς ἀνάλογον ὄντα πρὸς τὰς νοητὰς αἰτίας ἀπ' ἐκείνων ὁ Πλάτων ὑφίστησιν, ... ὅτι καὶ τὴν ἐνταῦθα ἀπειρίαν ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἀπειρίας παράγει, καθάπερ καὶ τὸ ἐνταῦθα πέρας ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκεῖ πέρατος.

86 *ET* Prop. 57, 56,14–16: 'Again, as many things as Intellect is a cause of, so also is the Good a cause, but not inversely. For even the privations of the Forms are from there [*scil.* the Good] (for all things are from there); but Intellect, being Form, is not constitutive of privation'. (καὶ δὴ καὶ ὅσων νοῦς αἴτιος, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αἴτιον· οὐκ ἔμπαλιν δέ. καὶ γὰρ αἱ στερήσεις τῶν εἰδῶν ἐκείθεν (πάντα γὰρ ἐκείθεν)· νοῦς δὲ στερήσεως ὑποστάτης οὐκ ἔστιν, εἶδος ὢν.)

87 Runia/Share in Proclus (2008a) link these three attributes—(1) 'good of a kind', (2) 'without limit', (3) 'the most indistinct being'—to the previous enumeration of ontological principles: the One as Good (1), the Unlimited (2), and the potentiality (δυναμίει ὄν) of One-Being.

δέδεικται δ' ἐν ἄλλοις, ὅτι τὴν πρώτην ἀπειρίαν, τὴν πρὸ τῶν μικτῶν, ἐν τῇ ἀκρότητι τῶν νοητῶν ἵδρυσε καὶ ἐκείθεν αὐτῆς διατείνει τὴν ἑλλαμψιν ἄχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων, ὥστε κατ' αὐτὸν ἡ ὕλη πρόεισιν ἔκ τε τοῦ ἐνὸς καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀπειρίας τῆς πρὸ τοῦ ἐνὸς ὄντος, εἰ δὲ βούλει, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνὸς ὄντος καθόσον ἐστὶ δυνάμει ὄν. διὸ καὶ ἀγαθὸν πῆ ἔστι καὶ ἄπειρον, καὶ ἀμυδρότατον ὄν καὶ ἀνείδεον, διὸ καὶ ταῦτα πρὸ τῶν εἰδῶν καὶ τῆς ἐκφάνσεως αὐτῶν.

In this passage Proclus implicitly references his position, taken from the *Philebus*, that Being is ultimately composed from the two principles of the Limit and Unlimited, both of which come below the One. Thus the hylomorphic compound of form and matter (or ultimately prime matter) are the lowest manifestations of the interplay between these two principles.<sup>88</sup> Proclus thus reads matter's procession from the One under the aspect, as it were, of the One-as-Unlimited, insofar as the Unlimited stands for the One in its productivity. It is notable that Proclus does not name one principle for matter—as he does in passages like *ET Prop.* 72, which just indicate the One—but rather the Unlimited alongside the One, or in addition, the 'potential being' of the One-Being.<sup>89</sup> At least the passage makes clear that matter's cause is not the One *unqualified* but the One in the capacity of the Unlimited. Yet if we compare with other passages from the *Elements* or in *On the Existence of Evils*, it is curious that Proclus only specifies the One in these cases.<sup>90</sup>

For now, these passages may resolve, at least partially, a tension from the conclusion of *ET Prop.* 72 that suggested that the One *in itself* produces matter. From what we have seen, Proclus implicitly delegates this causality to the

88 For the general schema for the Unlimited, see *In Parm.* 119,5–120,25; and the Limit, see *In Parm.* 121,18–123,14, in context for matter's correlation to the Unlimited (*In Parm.* 119,5–13) and enmattered form's correlation to the Limit (*In Parm.* 123,11–14).

89 See earlier n. 87.

90 The ambiguity raises a question about the status of the Unlimited in connection to the One: if the Unlimited is the direct cause of matter, then it must stand in for places where Proclus says that the One is the cause of matter. On the one hand the Unlimited is just like the henads which convey the One's unity to beings, while the Unlimited conveys the One's productivity of the lowest substrate, prime matter. At the same time, Proclus in *In Parm.* 1064,7–12, says that matter does not participate in the 'formative henads' (εἰδητικῶν ἐνάδων), presumably since the henads' activity comes afterward in the formation of enmattered form within the first substrate. This suggests that the Unlimited is prior to the henads, while insofar as it is implicitly identified with the One, it is also 'one' and 'good' by proxy. As we will eventually see, Proclus ends up making the Unlimited (as well as the Limit) a henad, which would explain how the Unlimited conveys the One's properties of goodness and unity. At the same time, the Unlimited has priority over the other henads, which indicates that it must be a 'henad' in a different sense. See below, 4.5.



Unlimited, so that it is the 'One' which is the cause, albeit in the capacity of the Unlimited. The Unlimited's position next to One then suggests that it acts as a proxy for the One's causality. In this respect Proclus still keeps to his principle of delegated causality for the One as an unparticipated cause.

### 4.3 The Henads as Participated Causes of the One

We have so far considered the One in itself as an unparticipated cause, including certain problems that come up when we relate it with its production of matter. We should now consider the henads, which delegate the One's causality by directly producing unity in all things. As was mentioned earlier, Proclus re-appropriates certain features of the Plotinian One with the henads: in particular, each henad anticipates and pre-contains the unique character of its respective effects. It is notable, then, that Proclus posits *multiple* 'ones', and not just a single 'one' or henad after the One-itself. This reflects Proclus' framework that each henad's causality is relative to its respective participant. The 'type' of unity then varies between each henad, insofar as the participants of the henads each vary according to their form and character: in turn, the varied effects are mirrored in the cause of each participant or set of participants. This would also be related to *ET Prop.* 116's claim that the henads are 'not-one' in some respect, yet 'one' by their subsistence. Exactly how the henads are each distinct—yet how their natures are 'one' like the One-itself—we should next investigate.

#### 4.3.1 *Distinguishing the Henads*

We have already seen the basic structure of the henads placed within an unparticipated/participated structure in *ET Prop.* 116,<sup>91</sup> while we also saw two factors involved for the henads: first, they each have an aspect that is 'not-one' which differentiates them from the One (and from each other), and second, due to their existence prior to Being, the henads are not differentiated by the ontological categories, sameness and difference, as applies to the Forms and the levels of Intellect and Soul.<sup>92</sup> This last feature raises a difficulty in accounting

91 Cf. earlier p. 170–171.

92 See for example the case of soul in *In Parm.* 819,14–16: 'Yet every monadic [soul] is constituted by its specific account (λόγον). For a soul does not differ from another by matter: either then by nothing altogether, or by its form'. (μοναδική δὲ πᾶσα καὶ καθ' ἓνα λόγον ἴδιον ὑφέστηκεν· οὐ γὰρ (τῇ) ὕλη διαφέρει ἄλλη ἄλλης, ἢ οὐκ οὐδενὶ διοίσει τὸ παράπαν, ἢ [οὐ] κατ' εἶδος.). See also *In Tim.* I, 446,24–26.

for both the ontological and epistemological distinction between the henads. While one might infer the distinction between each henad epistemologically from their participants, since each henad is characterized by its participant, how each henad *in itself* differs is not immediately apparent, even after *ET* Prop. 116.

Proclus recognizes this difficulty when he discusses in *Platonic Theology* III.4 how one can elucidate the distinction between each henad without importing differentiation from the categories of Being:<sup>93</sup>

But if [the henads] are unparticipated, how do they differ from the One? For each of them is one and brought to existence primarily from the One. Or, since they exceed the first cause, by what are they brought to existence from it? For again everywhere it is necessary that the secondary, which has been brought to existence by that which is before it, is deprived of the unity (ένώσεως) of the producer and is diminished in relation to the monadic simplicity of the First by the addition of something. What kind of addition, then, will we have to speak about, or what excess (πλεονασμόν) beside the One, if each of these is also a henad according to itself (καθ' έαυτήν)? For if each is one and many, we appear to transfer the unique character (ιδιότητα) of being to them. But if each is one only, just as the One-itself, through what does [the One] have causality which transcends all things, while each of these [henads] obtains a secondary rank?

PT III.4, 14,16–15,5

ἀλλ' εἰ ἀμέθεκτοι καὶ αὐταὶ, τί διοίσουσιν τοῦ ἑνός;—ἐκάστη γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἓν καὶ πρῶτως ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνός ὑφέστηκεν. ἢ τίνα πλεονάζουσιν τῆς πρῶτης αἰτίας ὑπ' αὐτῆς ὑφεστήκασιν;—ἀνάγκη γὰρ αὐτῶν πανταχοῦ τὸ δεύτερον ὑφειμένον τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ τῆς τοῦ παράγοντος ἐνώσεως ἀπολείπεσθαι καὶ προσθέσει τινὸς ἐλαττοῦσθαι τῆς τοῦ πρώτου μοναδικῆς ἀπλότητος. ποῖαν οὖν ἔξομεν πρόσθεσιν λέγειν ἢ τίνα πλεονασμόν παρὰ τὸ ἓν, εἰ καὶ τούτων ἐκάστη καθ' έαυτήν ἑνὰς ἐστὶν; εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἓν καὶ πολλὰ ἐκάστη, τὴν τοῦ ὄντος ιδιότητα μεταφέρειν ἐπ' αὐτάς ἐοίκαμεν· εἰ δὲ ἓν μόνον, ὥσπερ τὸ αὐτοῦ, διὰ τί τὸ μὲν ἔχει τὴν ἐξηρημένην ἀπὸ πασῶν αἰτίαν, τούτων δὲ ἐκάστη δευτέραν ἔλαχεν ἄξιαν;

The same consideration from *ET* Prop. 116 arises here, but Proclus re-orientes the investigation in terms of an *aporia*: if the henads are 'one' in the same way as the One-itself, then there is no substantive difference between the two. On

93 For similar accounts, cf. *In Tim.* 1, 226,15–19, and *In Parm.* 1067,4–13.

the other hand, if they are characterized as ‘not-one’ in some respect, this implies the ‘unique character of being’ (τὴν τοῦ ὄντος ιδιότητα) which suggests the distinct characters, ‘one’ and ‘many’. Yet Proclus’ last question could perhaps mean that qualifying the henads as ‘not-one’ in their being is not the right way, but rather they should be ‘not-one’ in terms of the effect that comes after them. Proclus’ answer afterward points in this direction: namely that each henad is ‘one’ in the same way, but their direct effect of plurality is what distinguishes them from the One.

For the plurality which is similar, according to which it is a plurality, communicates (κοινωνεῖ)<sup>94</sup> with what is dissimilar, while that according to which it is similar to the monad before it, is united with the [monad]. Being set up in the middle of both [entities], it is united to the whole and the One before the plurality, while in itself it contains together (συνέχει)<sup>95</sup> those things which have proceeded forward and which are dissimilar in relation to their unity,<sup>96</sup> and through itself (δι’ ἑαυτοῦ) it reverts all things towards [the One]. And in this way all things tend towards the very first cause of the universe (τῶν ὅλων),<sup>97</sup> dissimilar entities through what is similar, and similars through themselves.

PT III.4, 15,27–16,7

τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον πλῆθος καθ’ ὃ μὲν ἐστὶ πλῆθος κοινωνεῖ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ, καθ’ ὃ δὲ ὅμοιον τῇ πρὸ αὐτοῦ μονάδι συμφύεται πρὸς αὐτήν. ἐν μέσῳ τοίνυν ἀμφοτέρων ἰδρυμένον συνήνεται τῷ ὅλῳ καὶ τῷ ἐνὶ τῷ πρὸ τοῦ πλῆθους, ἐν ἑαυτῷ δὲ συνέχει τὰ πόρρω προεληλυθότα καὶ ἀνόμοια πρὸς τὸ ἑαυτῶν ἓν, καὶ δι’ ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο πάντα ἐπιστρέφει. καὶ πάντα οὕτως εἰς τὸ πρῶτιστον ἀνατείνεται τῶν ὅλων αἴτιον, τὰ μὲν ἀνόμοια διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων, τὰ δὲ ὅμοια δι’ ἑαυτῶν.

We can recognize the principle from *ET* Prop. 28 that causes produce according to similarity before unlike entities emerge,<sup>98</sup> as suggested in Proclus’ initial *aporia*. This justifies Proclus’ affirmation that the henads are ‘similar’ to the One, as equally ‘one’ like the One-itself, while plurality, as dissimilar to

94 Cf. the language of mutual ‘communication’ in *ET* Prop. 5, 6,9–10.

95 The terminology brings to mind Proclus’ use of συνεκτικόν causes. See discussion in p. 77.

96 Or, ‘to the One belonging to them,’ or ‘to their One’.

97 Following Westerink/Saffrey’s translation; literally, ‘the very first cause of the wholes’.

98 Cf. p. 94–95.

the One's unity, appears after the henads. Given this, Proclus' reference to the henads as in the 'middle' (ἐν μέσῳ) between the One and plurality can be somewhat misleading: it might initially suggest a symmetrical relationship between the henads and the One alongside that of the henads and plurality, such that the henads are equally 'similar' to the plurality they produce.<sup>99</sup> However in the middle of the passage, Proclus intriguingly says that the things which proceed forth from a given henad are 'dissimilar' in relation to the henad's own unity. This suggests that the henads produce dissimilar entities—relative to their unity—while the One produces the henads as similar. In this way the henads' 'middle' position should be contextualized. One should also note how Proclus phrases each henad's causal activity: 'through itself' (δι' ἑαυτοῦ) it reverts all things towards [the One]'. Thus, each henad brings about its effect of unity, however it does so by reference to a common cause before itself—namely, the One—while its causal activity is solely 'through itself' (δι' ἑαυτοῦ). This division reflects Proclus' distinction from *De Decem Dub.* 63 of the henads which exist as 'one' by their subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν), while the One exists as 'one' as a cause (κατ' αἰτίαν). In this sense, the existence of each henad's unity 'by subsistence' reflects the fact that each henad exists relative to its particular effect. So far this contextualizes *ET Prop.* 116 (as well as the participated 'One' in *Prop.* 5) with the 'not-one' element, insofar as that element is reflected by the henad's participated relationship.

While we may now see how the henads are characterized by their relation to the participants, we should still consider how each henad produces its particular, respective effect in contradistinction to the others. A start in this direction is to recall Proclus' claim, above, that each henad 'contains together' (συνέχει) its effects according to its unity. Proclus elaborates this in *ET Prop.* 118, where he applies the three-fold distinctions from *ET Prop.* 65 to the henads and says that the henads contain the different predicates of their effects—including all beings—in the mode of their existence as 'ones':<sup>100</sup>

99 To put it another way, this would be if the principle of *ET Prop.* 28 is applied between the henads and plurality at the same time as between the One and the henads, in relation to plurality. Thus each henad would be equally 'one' and pluralized—which isn't Proclus' claim.

100 *ET Prop.* 118, 104,5–7: 'Every particular [attribute] in the gods has pre-existed in them according to their unique character (ιδιότητα), and their unique character is unitary (ἐν-αία) and beyond being (ὑπερούσιος). Therefore all things exist in them in a unitary way and as beyond being' (πάν ὅ τι περ ἂν ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς ᾗ, κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ιδιότητα προϋφέστηκεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔστιν ἡ ιδιότης αὐτῶν ἐνιαία καὶ ὑπερούσιος ἐνιαίως ἅρα καὶ ὑπερουσίως πάντα ἐν αὐτοῖς).

For if each thing has existed (ὕφεστηκεν) in three ways—either as a cause (κατ' αἰτίαν), by subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν), or by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν)—and the divine series (ἀριθμός)<sup>101</sup> is the first series of all things, it will not exist in [the gods/henads] by participation, but all things will be by subsistence or by causality. But as many things as the gods have anticipated (προειλήφασιν) as the causes of all things, they have anticipated them by their unity (ένώσει) proper to them. For every entity which has primacy over secondary entities by causality contains in this way the cause of inferior things as it has made itself by nature. Therefore all things are in the gods in a unitary way and as beyond being (ὕπερουσίως).

*ET Prop. 118, 104,8–15*

καὶ γὰρ εἰ τριχῶς ἕκαστον ὕφεστηκεν, ἢ κατ' αἰτίαν ἢ καθ' ὑπαρξιν ἢ κατὰ μέθεξιν, πρῶτος δὲ πάντων ἀριθμὸς ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμὸς, οὐδὲν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔσται κατὰ μέθεξιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα καθ' ὑπαρξιν ἢ κατ' αἰτίαν. ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσα ὡς αἵτιοι πάντων προειλήφασιν, οἰκείως τῇ ἑαυτῶν ένώσει προειλήφασιν· καὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ κατ' αἰτίαν τῶν δευτέρων ἡγεμονοῦν, ὡς αὐτὸ πέφυκεν, οὕτως ἔχει τὴν αἰτίαν τῶν καταδεεστέρων. πάντα ἄρα ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς ένιαίως καὶ ὕπερουσίως.

One key term in this proposition is the henads' 'anticipation' (προλαμβάνειν, προειλήφασιν) of their effects.<sup>102</sup> The term indicates that the henads transcend the nature of their effect—namely a plurality of one kind or another—but that they also have a kind of synonymy with their effect. This is a feature we have already seen in Plotinus' One, as mentioned earlier, and we see it here brought forth with the henads. The henads are entirely 'one' in their subsistence (ὕπαρξις), but they are also 'being' by their causality (κατ' αἰτίαν) or anticipation of the effect. In this way Proclus permits predication of the lower levels of beings up to 'the One', albeit as participated in distinct henads.

Exactly how the henads are epistemically determined becomes more tricky: in themselves the henads are 'one' by their subsistence, apart from the variation in the effects of their participants. When looked at in themselves, then, there is no difference between them and the One, except in terms of their effects.<sup>103</sup> Thus any distinction that one can make between each henad would have to come from the effects' level, that is from a given henad's participant.

101 I follow Dodds and others who take ἀριθμός in Proclus' usage as synonymous with σειρά (as in Iamblichus).

102 Compare this with Damascius' use of 'anticipation', πρόληψις, which he denies of the One: cf. p. 238–240.

103 Cf. Chlup (2012) 114.

For example, the henad that corresponds to the monad, Intellect, can only be determined from the kind of effects found within its order, as manifested in Intellect itself, followed by the ensuing effects of Intellect in the lower chains.<sup>104</sup> The 'type' of unity in a given henad, or class of henads, is then epistemically determined by the particular effects which come forth from a specific order of being (or Life, or Intellect, for the top three genera of the intelligible world).<sup>105</sup>

We see this demonstrated in Prop. 123, where Proclus shows that every god is unknowable in itself, but knowable on the level of its effects, that is by its participants. The last few lines of the proposition make clear that the henads collectively do not generate the same kind of effects across participants—specifically to the degree that each participant or group of participants varies. Yet the variation of effects confirms only that certain henads belong to certain participants and not others.<sup>106</sup> We may consider an application of this principle for the henads that bring about Being in *ET* Prop. 162,<sup>107</sup> where Proclus establishes that 'every plurality of henads which illuminates true being is hidden and intelligible: hidden, as conjoined with the One, intelligible as participated by being'.<sup>108</sup>

For all the gods are named from the entities which have been attached to them, because their different existences, subsisting as unknowable,<sup>109</sup> are able to be known from these dependent principles. For all that which is divine is ineffable and unknowable according to itself, being naturally united to the One as ineffable; yet from the variations of the participants,

<sup>104</sup> This is of course a simplistic example: in *ET* Prop. 163, Proclus speaks of a plurality of henads which are participated (rather than just one) by the unparticipated Intellect. In this regard the henads would *jointly* share the character of being intellective, inasmuch as they together cause Intellect (142,13–16).

<sup>105</sup> We will consider the general 'kinds' of henads more below in Sect. 4.3.3.

<sup>106</sup> *ET* Prop. 123, 110,5–9: 'For differences within a given set of participants are determined by the unique characters (ιδιότηας) of the participated principles; everything does not participate everything (for there is no coordination of the entirely dissimilar), nor does one chance thing participate a chance thing, but to each cause is attached, and from each proceeds, that effect which is akin to it'. (κατὰ γὰρ τὰς τῶν μετεχομένων ιδιότητας καὶ αἱ τῶν μετεχόντων συνδιαίρουνται διαφορότητες, καὶ οὔτε πᾶν μετέχει παντός (οὐ γὰρ ἔστι σύνταξις τῶν πάντῃ ἀνομοίων) οὔτε τὸ τυχὸν τοῦ τυχόντος μετέχει, ἀλλὰ τὸ συγγενὲς ἐκάστῳ συνήπται καὶ ἀφ' ἐκάστου πρόεισιν.)

<sup>107</sup> As opposed to henads pertaining to Intellect (Prop. 163) or pertaining to Soul (Prop. 164).

<sup>108</sup> 140,28–30: πᾶν τὸ καταλάμπων τὸ ὄντως ὄν πληθος τῶν ἐνάδων κρύφιον καὶ νοητὸν ἔστι· κρύφιον μὲν ὡς τῷ ἐνὶ συνημμένον, νοητὸν δὲ ὡς ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄντος μετεχόμενον.

<sup>109</sup> Note here the contrast between ὑποστάσεις (translated as 'existences') and ὑπαρχούσας (translated as 'subsisting'). Cf. p. 80 n.27.

it comes to make known the unique characters (ιδιότηας) of the divine entities. The gods which illuminate true Being (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) are, then, intelligible because true Being is a divine and unparticipated intelligible which subsists prior to Intellect. For the latter would not have been attached to the very first gods if the former [*scil.* the gods illuminating true Being] did not possess an existence primary in their operation and a power perfective of the other gods, inasmuch as the subsistences of participated entities stand in the same relation to each other as the participants.

*ET Prop.* 162, 140,31–142,8

ἀπὸ γὰρ τῶν ἐξημμένων πάντες οἱ θεοὶ καλοῦνται, διότι καὶ τὰς ὑποστάσεις αὐτῶν τὰς διαφόρους ἀπὸ τούτων, ἀγνώστους ὑπαρχούσας, γνῶναι δυνατόν. ἄρρητον γὰρ καθ' αὐτὸ πᾶν τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἄγνωστον, ὡς τῷ ἐνὶ τῷ ἄρρητῳ συμφύες· ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς τῶν μετεχόντων ἐξαλλαγῆς καὶ τὰς ἐκείνων ιδιότηας γνωρίζεσθαι συμβαίνει. νοητοὶ δὴ οὖν εἰσιν οἱ τὸ ὄντως ὄν καταλάμποντες, διότι δὴ τὸ ὄντως ὄν νοητόν ἐστι θεῖον καὶ ἀμέθεκτον, τοῦ νοῦ προϋφεστηκός. οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοῦτο τῶν πρωτίστων ἐξήπτο θεῶν, εἰ μὴ κάκεῖνοι πρωτουργὸν εἶχον ὑπόστασιν καὶ δύναμιν τελειωτικὴν τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν, εἴπερ ὡς τὰ μετέχοντα πρὸς ἄλληλα, οὕτω καὶ αἱ τῶν μετεχομένων ἔχουσιν ὑπάρξεις.

The final lines indicate that the ‘first order of gods’ must have the particular kind of nature, or characteristic, by which Being is unified in that specific order. This suggests that the group of henads within the order belonging to Being has a specific character internally which does not match another order’s henads which are attached to Intellect. This would confirm an objective, rather than subjective, reading for the differentiating character of the henads: that is, the henads are not just differentiated from our perspective. While each henad exists as entirely ‘one’—and in that sense, one cannot tell one henad apart from the other—the inference of attributes in each henad points to an internal character (ιδιότης) which brings about a specific set of effects. Thus even though the henads are ineffable by their subsistence, κατ’ αἰτίαν predication indicates an internal or ‘hidden’ existence of the attribute predicated within a given henad or set of henads. In other words, the henads are virtually distinguished by their unique characters, while their mode of existence implies that they are in no way different from each other.<sup>110</sup>

110 Or, let alone, that they are the ‘same’ as each other: since the henads by their unity transcend being, the categories of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ do not apply to them. See the next section below.



#### 4.3.2 *The Henads' Derivation from the One*

Given that the henads are implicitly distinguished according to their internal character, we should next see how the One derives the henads without it, in turn, implying a similar kind of multiplicity. In this, we should see Proclus' discussion of the henads' derivation from the One and how he accounts for the virtual difference between the henads and the One—without, at once, importing ontological difference in the henads.

One place where we find the henads' derivation discussed is in the *Parmenides Commentary* where Proclus distinguishes between three general kinds of procession:<sup>111</sup>

In general every procession comes to be either (1) according to unity (καθ' ἔνωσιν), (2) according to sameness (κατὰ ταυτότητα), or (3) according to likeness (καθ' ὁμοιότητα): (1) according to unity, with the henads themselves beyond being, for there is no sameness in them, nor likeness according to form, but only unity (ἔνωσις); (2) according to sameness, as for partless essences, where what proceeds is the same in some way with what remains—for all things which are safeguarded and held together by eternity manifest in some way the sameness of part to whole; (3) and according to similarity, as for the intermediate and lowest levels of beings, which, though intermediate, are the first to welcome procession by way of likeness, \*\*\*<sup>112</sup> whether in some cases it be sameness and difference or likeness and unlikeness that is their cause.

*In Parm.* 745.14–23

ὅλως δὲ πᾶσα πρόοδος ἢ καθ' ἔνωσιν γίγνεται, ἢ κατὰ ταυτότητα, ἢ καθ' ὁμοιότητα· καθ' ἔνωσιν μὲν, ὥς ἐπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ὑπερουσίῳν ἐνάδων· οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐν ἐκείναις ταυτότης ἢ κατ' εἶδος ὁμοιότης, ἀλλ' ἔνωσις μόνον· κατὰ δὲ ταυτότητα, ὥς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμερίστων οὐσιῶν, ὅπου τὸ προῖδον τῷ μένοντι ταῦτόν πῶς ἐστὶ· πᾶσαι γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος φρουρούμεναι καὶ συνεχόμεναι ταῦτό πῶς ἀποφαίνουσι τῷ ὅλῳ τὸ μέρος· κατὰ δὲ ὁμοιότητα, ὥς ἐπὶ τῶν μέσων καὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων οὐσιῶν· ταῦτα γὰρ κἂν ἢ μέσα, ἀλλὰ πρῶτα τὴν διὰ τῆς ὁμοιότητος ἡγάπησε

111 Cf. *PT* III.3, 12,2–13,4, which also gives the same type of criteria in the derivation of the henads from the One.

112 Steel indicates a lacuna here, although it seems possible that this final line could refer to (3), insofar as (3) could relate to the emergence of the Forms at different levels *within* Intellect—for instance, as implied with the 'intermediate levels', the 'intelligible-and-intellective' level or 'intellective' level of Intellect.

πρόοδον· \*\*\* εἴτε ταυτότης εἴη καὶ ἑτερότης, εἴτε ἀνομοιότης τινῶν αἰτία καὶ ὁμοιότης·

Out of the three kinds of procession, one can see a reference to the *Sophist's* 'Great Kinds' (μέγιστα γένη) with identity or sameness (ταύτης) in (2), where simultaneous identity and difference characterize intelligible being. Proclus suggests this in a previous passage where he relates Intellect's procession from the 'Father', implicitly Being, in terms of identity rather than as an image, like Soul from Intellect.<sup>113</sup> Intellect's procession from, and contemplation of, the intelligible Father then implies the identity of Intellect with its intelligible object, as well as Intellect's difference from the intelligible, insofar as the intelligible is prior to Intellect.<sup>114</sup> By comparison, (3) would be a subset or species of (2) where simultaneous likeness and unlikeness apply in the relation of the image to its archetype, as Soul to Intellect. Thus the henads' procession, (1), stands as a contrast case, where the henads' transcendence over being implies that their mode of procession is also beyond the *Sophist's* μέγιστα γένη, including identity as an intelligible kind. On this understanding, one cannot affirm that the henads are the 'same' as each other, since identity simultaneously implies difference (ἑτερότης) on the *Sophist* model that Proclus appears to follow.

One can characterize the difference between each of the henads—and the difference between the henads and the One—in terms of non-identical unity. One can see this in earlier passages where Proclus links the henads' unity to their attribute of being 'self-complete' (αὐτοτελής), which implies that they have no dependency on, or relation to, any other principle—including even the One, let alone each other.<sup>115</sup> This indicates that their radical individuality transcends any categories of commonality which apply to Intellect and the Forms. To this degree the henads serve as paradigmatic principles of particulars as individuals prior to universals, which correlate with the individuals

113 *In Parm.* 745,2–13. Proclus also cites Plato's *Tim.* 37d6–7, with time as an image of eternity, as background for his characterization of Soul as an image of Intellect. Soul's procession from Intellect is used to describe Intellect's procession from the intelligible, although Proclus acknowledges the lack of textual support for this in the *Timaeus* (*In Parm.* 745,6–9).

114 'Difference' (ἑτερότης), although not explicitly mentioned, is suggested in 745,18 when Proclus qualifies the procession of ταύτης as πως, 'in some way'. The qualification suggests sameness (ταύτης) can only be predicated in certain regards, not unqualifiedly, implying its simultaneous contrary—i.e. difference.

115 *ET Prop.* 114: 'Every god is a self-complete henad, and every self-complete henad is a god' (πᾶς θεὸς ἑνὰς ἐστὶν αὐτοτελής, καὶ πᾶσα αὐτοτελής ἑνὰς θεός).

posterior to universal causes like the Forms.<sup>116</sup> At the same time, because the henads are not characterized by difference (ἐτερότης), the correlate to their individuality is their unity *within* each other, as we see later in the *Parmenides Commentary*:

For all things are in all, which is not the case for the Forms: for these participate each other, yet all things are not in all. But in the same way, since there is such a degree of unity (ένώσεως) up there, how marvelous and unmixed is their purity, and the unique character (ιδιότης) of each of them is a much more perfect thing than the otherness of the Forms, preserving unconfused the divine entities and their proper powers as differentiated.

*In Parm.* 1048,14–20<sup>117</sup>

πάσαι γάρ εἰσιν ἐν πάσαις, ὃ μὴ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς εἶδεσι· ταῦτα γὰρ μετέχει μὲν ἀλλήλων, πάντα δὲ ἐν πασὶν οὐκ ἔστιν. ἀλλ' ὅμως καὶ τοιαύτης<sup>118</sup> οὔσης ἐκεῖ τῆς ένώσεως, οὕτω θαυμαστή τις ἐστὶ καὶ ἀμιγῆς αὐτῶν καθαρότης, καὶ ἡ ἐκάστων ιδιότης πολλῷ τελεώτερον τῆς τῶν εἰδῶν ἐτερότητος, ἀσύγχυτα τηροῦσα τὰ θεῖα καὶ διακεκριμένας τὰς οἰκείας δυνάμεις.

In the passage, we find a striking modification of the principle, 'all things are in all', from *ET* Prop. 103. There, Proclus applies the phrase to the principles of Being, Life, and Intellect, although qualified: each principle is 'all things' only according to the mode of its existence—for instance, Being contains 'all things' (i.e. Life and Intellect) in a 'substantial way' (ὄντως), and so on for Life and Intellect.<sup>119</sup> One may then be surprised to see Proclus make almost the opposite claim in the passage above: that all things are *not* in all for the Forms. Yet Proclus appears to be looking at the *unqualified* claim that 'all things are in all': in this case for the Forms—and implicitly Being, Life, and Intellect—'all things' cannot be in each other in this way. The henads, by contrast, are altogether in each other, insofar as each implies the other without any difference or sameness implied. However a second meaning behind Proclus' claim is that

<sup>116</sup> See further Chlup (2012) 112–136 (esp. 131), and Butler (2005) for a general overview of the gods as supreme individuals. One can also see the henads as paradigms of individuals as an application of the principle of *ET* Prop. 72, where superior causes produce a greater range of effects than lower causes.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Chlup (2012) 114–115.

<sup>118</sup> Accepting Steel's emendation in place of ταύτης in ΑΣγ as in Cousin.

<sup>119</sup> *ET* Prop. 103, esp. 92,15–16.

the henads, as 'all in all', imply all things in themselves without any differentiation: in other words they imply all the lower effects of being without the characteristic differences of the lower levels. This would go in hand with Proclus' earlier claim in the *Commentary* that to say 'henad' is the same as saying 'principle' (ἀρχήν).<sup>120</sup> Once more this indicates the henads' role as the *direct* first causes of being insofar as they are participated, by contrast to the One.

Going back to the henads' procession, we should also see how Proclus considers what is preserved or carried over in the kinds of procession, with an eye towards the henads' own procession. We have already reviewed a key passage from the *Parmenides Commentary* where Proclus distinguishes between two kinds of derivation in relation to the cause:<sup>121</sup> (a) by 'diminution' (καθ' ὑπόβασιν), and (b) by a 'change of substance' (κατ' οὐσίας ἐξαλλαγὴν). This passage comes after Proclus' three kinds of procession, above (*In Parm.* 745,14–23), so it is meant to correlate with these distinctions. As we noted in discussing (a) and (b), it is rather surprising that Proclus does not mention a third kind of derivation that corresponds to the henads' procession, καθ' ἑνωσιν. In one way this makes sense: (a) and (b) imply difference (ἐτερότητας) between the cause and the derived entity, but the henads do not imply any difference or true separation between themselves and the One.

Given this, we should note that Proclus links derivation by (a) to participated entities produced from their unparticipated source, as even the passage's example suggests: particular intellects are derived καθ' ὑπόβασιν from the 'whole Intellect' (ὅλος νοῦς), so they differ from their cause by a narrowing of their effect. Proclus' example of Intellect and particular intellects hearkens to *ET Prop.* 170, where particular intellects are said to know all things 'according to one aspect' (καθ' ἓν), while Intellect knows all things 'simply' (ἀπλῶς).<sup>122</sup> Since the henads and the One are respectively participated and unparticipated, then by analogy the derivation by (a) should obtain. One can argue this from the earlier passage in *PT* 111.4, where Proclus concludes that the henads, while 'one' in themselves, are differentiated only with respect to the dissimilar,

120 *In Parm.* 1048,1–5. Just after in 1048,5–7, Proclus claims that 'men of old' applied the concept of the 'whole One' to incorporeal being, while 'Other' was applied to corporeal and divisible world. Pythagoreans appear to be referenced for the 'men of old' (Dillon references *PT* v, 332,19–22 (Ruelle), and Damascius, *In Phd.* 1, 154,3; Steel references Damascius, *In Parm.* 111, 74,14–17); for further background, see Horky (2013) 136. The insertion of this reference is initially not clear, but it appears that Proclus uses this prior authority to show that the same analogy applies between the intelligible and henadic realms, in the same way as between the sensible and intelligible.

121 *In Parm.* 745,28–746,9. Cf. 2.3.

122 *ET Prop.* 170, 148,4–5. Cf. p. 109 n.119.

distinct kind of effects that come after them. This implies that the internal character by which each henad produces its distinct effects is what differentiates each. An analogous relation would then apply between Intellect and particular intellects and the One and the henads, except with the *proviso* that the intellects imply difference where there is none for the henads. In turn, the fact that Proclus does not relate the henads' derivation to the One as 'according to diminution' (καθ' ὑπόβασιν) shows that he understands and preserves the henads' nature as 'one', and in turn secures the One from plurality insofar as the henads are simply 'one' as much as the One-itself is.

Although one should be cautious about this interpretation, Proclus' characterization of the henads in their participated relationships suggests a closely analogous case to that of particular intellects that are produced from Intellect. Yet we should keep in mind the ambiguity in Proclus' approach, especially when we see how Proclus attempts to address how the different internal characters of the henads are derived.

#### 4.3.3 *Orders of the Henads, and the Limit/Unlimited*

While we have accounted for how the henads proceed from the One, we still need to see how the henads' differing internal characters (ιδιότητες) are correlated to with their effects, as we first saw in Sect. 4.3.2. As we saw in *ET* Prop. 163, the henads that belong to a given order of reality, like Being, are correspondingly called 'intelligible' insofar as they possess that character by their causality (κατ' αἰτίαν). Just as the different levels of being have more universal and particular kinds of effects, whether from the level of Being, Intellect, Soul, or Nature, so also each henad is correspondingly more or less universal in terms of the range of its effects.<sup>123</sup> In the same way, the variation in the effects also indicates how the henads are themselves ordered as causes (κατ' αἰτίαν).<sup>124</sup>

Although the henads relate to all levels of being, from the highest (Being) to the lowest (bodies),<sup>125</sup> they are correspondingly grouped with the specific

<sup>123</sup> *ET* Prop. 136. Cf. *ET* Prop. 72.

<sup>124</sup> It is worth noting that Proclus does not refer to specific henads/gods in the *Elements of Theology*, as he does in the *Platonic Theology*, but rather he refers to specific orders, or sets, of gods. Recalling that each henad is referred to by its participants, the characteristic of these groups lies in the functionality of these henads in relation to their attributes. This suggests that Proclus' classification here is according to specific and general kinds of actions by the henads, while the internal character of each henad is what contributes to that henad belonging to one or another group.

<sup>125</sup> *ET* Prop. 139. Cf. Chlup (2012) 120.

set of entities they act upon.<sup>126</sup> One sees this in *ET* Prop's. 151–158, where Proclus enumerates a general collection of divine orders which correspond to the three causal stages of remaining (μονή), procession (πρόοδος), and reversion (ἐπιστροφή): in particular, the 'paternal' (Prop. 151), 'generative' (Prop. 152), 'perfective' (Prop. 153), 'protective' (Prop. 154), 'life-giving' (Prop. 155), 'purificatory' (Prop. 156), 'demiurgic' (Prop. 157), and 'elevative' (Prop. 158).<sup>127</sup> Among this collection Proclus structures certain of the orders under others, such as the 'life-giving' under the more general kind, 'generative';<sup>128</sup> 'purifying' under the more general kind, 'protective';<sup>129</sup> and so on. Because each of the orders is subordinated or has priority over each other, this suggests some form of derivation between the orders, between the more general and particular. We see this hinted in *ET* Prop. 132, which shows that each order of gods are continuous with each other through mean terms or principles.<sup>130</sup> Orders like the 'paternal' and 'perfective', which are respectively correlated with the causal stages of 'remaining' and 'reversion', are then linked by the middle order of the 'generative', which brings about the 'paternal' order's effects into what will be perfected.<sup>131</sup> This is loosely analogous to a general causal principle of mediation seen in *ET* Prop. 28, as for instance Being and Intellect require a middle term (Life) which shares attributes of both principles while providing a 'bridge' from one principle to the other.

126 See e.g. *ET* Prop's. 162–165, where Proclus identifies henads pertaining to, and identical with, Being, Intellect, Soul, and body/bodies (respectively).

127 Dodds in Proclus (1963) 278, n. 2, thinks Proclus gets this list from the *Chaldean Oracles* rather than straightforwardly from the Platonic tradition. Cf. O'Meara (1989) 205: 'Finally the properties that are named by Proclus—the "paternal", the "generative", the "perfective", the "protective", etc. (props. 151 ff.)—are not especially mathematical in character. It is true that their analogues can be found in mathematical objects: Proclus elsewhere relates the "paternal" to the monad and the "generative" to the dyad, whereas the triad is traditionally regarded as perfective. But it is surely significant that Proclus, in introducing these different properties of the henads, does not attribute them to particular members of a numerical series, as does Iamblichus. It is as if Proclus wishes to avoid an identification of each of the henads with each number in a decadic series. In this we may regard Proclus as applying with rigour the distinction he finds between theologizing mathematics and theology proper. In consequence however Proclus' treatment of the henads in the *Elements* is somewhat general and vague.'

128 *ET* Prop. 155, esp. 136,12–15.

129 *ET* Prop. 156, esp. 136,23–25.

130 *ET* Prop. 132, 116,28: 'All orders of gods are bound together by intermediate entities'. (πάσαι τῶν θεῶν αἱ τάξεις μεσότητι συνδέθενται.)

131 See D'Ancona Costa (1992) 273–275, who references *In Tim.* 1, 441,3–12, which parallels the list of attributes between *ET* Prop's. 151–158.

The orders listed in Prop's. 151–158 are bookended by two important propositions: Prop. 150, where higher gods are said to encompass more than the lower, and Prop. 159, where Proclus says that all the orders of the gods are derived from the principles of Limit and the Unlimited. Starting with Prop. 150, we find an important elucidation of why the henads are grouped in higher and lower orders:

*Everything which proceeds in the divine orders is not able to receive all the powers of its producer, nor generally the secondary principles [of receiving] all the powers of the [gods] before them; but [the prior principles] possess certain powers which transcend that of their inferiors, as well as incomprehensible (ἀπεριλήπτους) powers for entities after them.*

For if the unique characters (ιδιότητες) of the gods differ, those of the lower pre-substist in the higher [gods], while those of the higher, being more general, are not in the lower, but the superior [gods] give certain powers in the producers from them; other powers they pre-embrace in themselves transcendently. For it has been shown that more general (ὀλικώτεροι) principles are closer to the One, while more particular ones are further. And the more general are those which possess more comprehensive powers in relation to the more particular. Therefore the [gods] which have a secondary and more particular order will not comprehend the power of the former [more general, complete]. Thus in the higher gods there is something which is incomprehensible and uncircumscribed for the lower gods.

ET Prop. 150, 132,1–15

πάν τὸ προῖόν ἐν ταῖς θείαις τάξεσι πάσας ὑποδέχεσθαι τὰς τοῦ παράγοντος δυνάμεις οὐ πέφυκεν, οὐδὲ ὅλως τὰ δεύτερα πάσας τὰς τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' ἔχει τινὰς ἐκεῖνα τῶν καταδεεστέρων ἐξηρημέναις δυνάμεις καὶ ἀπεριλήπτους τοῖς μετ' αὐτά.

εἰ γὰρ αἱ τῶν θεῶν ιδιότητες διαφέρουσιν, αἱ μὲν τῶν ὑφειμένων ἐν τοῖς ὑπερτέροις προϋπάρχουσιν, αἱ δὲ τῶν ὑπερτέρων, ὀλικωτέρων ὄντων, ἐν τοῖς ὑφειμένοις οὐκ εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰς μὲν ἐνδίδωσι τὰ κρείττονα τοῖς ἀπ' αὐτῶν παραγομένοις, τὰς δὲ ἐν αὐτοῖς προεἶληφεν ἐξηρημένως. δέδεικται γὰρ ὅτι ὀλικώτεροι μὲν εἰσιν οἱ ἐγγυτέρω τοῦ ἑνός, μερικώτεροι δὲ οἱ πορρώτερον· οἱ δὲ ὀλικώτεροι τῶν μερικωτέρων περιληπτικωτέρας ἔχουσι δυνάμεις· οὐκ ἄρα τὴν ἐκεῖνων δύναμιν οἱ δευτέραν ἔχοντες τάξιν καὶ μερικωτέραν περιλήψονται. ἔστιν ἄρα ἐν τοῖς ὑπερτέροις ἀπερίληπτόν τι καὶ ἀπερίγραφον τοῖς ὑφειμένοις.



At first this proposition may come as a surprise: we have considered the henads as simply 'one', without differentiation, beyond any ranking that would imply difference or plurality. Yet this is exactly what Proclus seems to suggest here, when he says that certain henads transcend others in terms of their powers. We should first recall how the henads are distinguished by their particular characters (ιδιότητες), which are in turn manifested in their respective participants. In Prop. 150 we have a new term to consider for the henads—'power' (δύναμις)—which indicates the range of each henad's effects or, collectively, the set of henads within a given divine order.<sup>132</sup> Each henad is then 'higher' or 'lower' in relation to the other depending on its particular power, while the latter is correlated in turn with the henad's character. The henads are then 'higher' and 'lower' by their internal character, and not their subsistence, where their ranking is only manifested on the level of their effects. Consequently, while the henads are self-complete and do not depend on anything else for their unity, as we have already seen, there is a certain form of derivation in terms of their *characters* in relation to each other. This would make sense of Proclus switching from referring to the specific character, or power, pertaining to one henad and then speaking of orders of gods transcending others in Prop. 150, and by proxy the further Prop's. 151–158 which delineate specific orders of gods.<sup>133</sup>

Speaking of derivation for the henads leads us to Prop. 159, where Proclus generalizes the different divine orders according to the Limit and Unlimited:

*Every order of gods is derived from the first principles, Limit and Unlimited, but some more in relation to the causality of the Limit, others more in regard to the causality of the Unlimited.*

For everything proceeds from both, since the communications of the first causes extend through all secondary principles. But at some points the Limit dominates in the mixture, and at other points the Unlimited. And in this way one kind with the form of limit results, in which elements

<sup>132</sup> Insofar as the powers of the henads are differentiated, the previous *ET* Prop. 121 must be kept in mind, where Proclus says that the triadic structure of subsistence (ὑπαρξις), power (δύναμις), and activity (ἐνέργεια) exists as unified in the henads' unity. Thus in their mode of existence, there is no differentiation, but in terms of each henad's unique character the differentiation between each term is implied.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Butler (2008b) 136–138, on the henads' powers as a mediating role between their respective unity and plurality. It is also worth noting, Prop. 150 speaks of the henads specifically, Prop's. 151–159 refer collectively to *groups* of henads in terms of the 'orders of the gods'. The placement of Prop. 150 however suggests that the individual characters differentiating one henad from the other forms the basis for the 'orders', especially insofar as commonality of function is what individuates one order from another.

of the limit prevail; and another kind with the form of the unlimited results, in which elements of the unlimited prevail.

*ET Prop.* 159, 138,33–140,4

πάσα τάξις θεῶν ἐκ τῶν πρώτων ἐστὶν ἀρχῶν, πέρατος καὶ ἀπειρίας· ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν πρὸς τῆς τοῦ πέρατος αἰτίας μάλλον, ἡ δὲ πρὸς τῆς ἀπειρίας.

πάσα μὲν γὰρ ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων πρόεσι, διότι τῶν πρώτων αἰτίων αἱ μεταδόσεις διήκουσι διὰ πάντων τῶν δευτέρων. ἀλλ' ὅπου μὲν τὸ πέρας ἐνδυναστεύει κατὰ τὴν μίξιν, ὅπου δὲ τὸ ἀπειρον· καὶ οὕτω δὴ τὸ μὲν περατοειδὲς ἀποτελεῖται γένος, ἐν ᾧ τὰ τοῦ πέρατος κρατεῖ· τὸ δὲ ἀπειροειδὲς, ἐν ᾧ τὰ τῆς ἀπειρίας.

We have already seen references to the principles, Limit and Unlimited (which we will analyze further below). Here Proclus appeals to these two principles to explain two common attributes that arise in all the divine orders: the 'form of limit' (περατοειδές) and the 'form of unlimited' (ἀπειροειδές).<sup>134</sup> Although he does not explicitly refer to the previous propositions, the context of Prop's. 150–158 makes clear that Proclus is referring back to the orders described in these with the characteristics of 'limit' and 'unlimited'. Where we saw that the orders generally pertain to the stages of remaining, procession, and reversion in Prop's. 151–158, Proclus implicitly re-classifies the gods corresponding with these three stages to the Limit, Unlimited, and the 'mixture' from the two. One can see this insofar as Proclus typically associates the Limit and Unlimited with the causal stages of 'remaining' and 'procession', respectively, while reversion implies the combination of both Limit and Unlimited.<sup>135</sup> In the same way, gods such as those under the 'paternal' and 'perfective' orders correspond to the Limit; those under the 'generative' and 'life-giving' orders correspond to the Unlimited; and so on. Prop. 150 is then a harbinger for 159, insofar as certain gods are sub-ordinated under each other depending on the extent of their power and what they effect. In the same way, the various orders of gods are subordinated under either the Limit or the Unlimited.

Given this background, E.R. Dodds raises a crucial difficulty with his reading of Prop. 159: 'It is somewhat surprising that the henads, which are ἐνικότατον and ἀπλούσταται,<sup>136</sup> should be infected by this radical duality',<sup>137</sup> i.e. of the

<sup>134</sup> Here I follow D'Ancona Costa (1992). It is notable that Proclus describes the Limit and Unlimited as *πρώται ἀρχαί* rather than super-ordinate orders over the other orders. This implies that they transcend the orders, and that they are not 'henads' in the same way that the henads in each order are.

<sup>135</sup> See Dodds' commentary in Proclus (1963) 278–279.

<sup>136</sup> *ET Prop.* 127, esp. 112,27 and 112,31.

<sup>137</sup> See commentary on Prop. 159 in Proclus (1963) 281.

characters of limit and unlimited. Dodds follows the Byzantine commentator, Nicholas of Methone's own interpretation of the passage: 'And if there are certain other things [*scil.* Limit and Unlimited] which are principles of the gods, why are these not rather gods? And how are the gods composed [of limit and infinity]?'<sup>138</sup> Nicholas' reading, as well as Dodds', takes into account the first line of the proposition where Proclus says that the orders are derived from the ἀρχῶν ('principles') of the Limit and Unlimited. Initially this might suggest that the henads within the orders are composed (σύνθετοι) out of the Limit and Unlimited. It is noteworthy that the proposition refers to the *orders*, rather than the henads themselves, that are derived (ἐκ) from the two principles, even though both Dodds and Nicholas appear to treat the composition implied in the divine orders as proportionally carrying over to the henads.

This tension we will address further below, but beforehand we should first consider why Proclus posits the Limit and Unlimited in the first place. As we saw in Iamblichus in Chapter 1, Proclus employs the model of the Limit and Unlimited to explain the derivation of Being according to the characters of unity and plurality. It is because Being is composed (σύνθετον) of the 'limit' and 'unlimited' as distinct elements within itself that it becomes the first entity below the One characterized by plurality.

#### 4.4 The Limit and Unlimited: a Second Participated Model?

So far we have seen Proclus reference the henads, from *ET* Prop. 6 and other passages, as the participated counterparts of the One: they essentially carry out the One's causality directly in the participants of unity. Yet given Prop. 159, above, Proclus also seems to refer to the Limit and Unlimited in a similar capacity as mediators of the One's causality. This especially stands out in Prop. 159's claim that the Limit and Unlimited are the first principles (τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν)

<sup>138</sup> Nicholas of Methone, *Refutation* 142,29–30: καὶ εἰ τῶν θεῶν ἄλλ' ἅττα ἀρχαί, τί μὴ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον θεοί; καὶ πῶς σύνθετοι οἱ θεοί; In 142,23–26, Nicholas seems to have a different reading for the Limit and Unlimited, taking the Limit as relative only to each thing's limit, like the 'one' for Aristotle: 'Alas for this marvelous theogony, if the gods are from such principles, the sort which in themselves are not able to bring to existence (ὑποστήναι). For it is clear that the limit is a limit of something, but in itself it is nothing, and the unlimited is the privation of limit, and both are without existence (ἀνυπόστατα)'. (βαβαὶ τῆς θαυμασίας θεογονίας, εἰ ἐκ τοιούτων εἰσὶν ἀρχῶν οἱ θεοί, οἷαι καθ' ἑαυτὰς ὑποστήναι οὐ δύνανται. δῆλον γὰρ ὡς τὸ μὲν πέρασ τινός ἐστι πέρασ, καθ' αὐτὸ δὲ οὐδὲν ἐστίν, ἢ δὲ ἀπειρία πέρατος στέρησις, καὶ ἀμφοτέρω ἀνυπόστατα.) Special thanks to Joshua Robinson for providing his commentary and translation of Nicholas' commentary.

of the divine orders, while Proclus elsewhere indicates the Limit and Unlimited as the principles of Being and all lower beings. However, Proclus also calls the henads 'first principles',<sup>139</sup> which reflects their status as participated intermediaries of the One. One could argue that positing the Limit and Unlimited is then superfluous: if the henads carry out the function of the One in generating unity (and implicitly plurality), what do the Limit and Unlimited contribute?

As it turns out, Proclus uses the Limit and Unlimited to explain the immanent features of unity and plurality in real Being (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) and all other, lower levels of being. In this he maintains the essential four 'Kinds' framework from Plato's *Philebus*, which we saw in Prop. 5 and previously in Iamblichus' own framework.<sup>140</sup> As we saw for the latter, the Limit and Unlimited directly generate the 'divine numbers' which correspond to the henads. Unlike Proclus (and Syrianus),<sup>141</sup> where the henads are simply 'one', Iamblichus allows that the henads are both 'one' and intelligible, possibly reflecting their derived nature from the Limit and Unlimited. Proclus' position in this case is thus a contrast when he makes the henads just 'one', following the principle of synonymy in *ET* Prop. 28. One could well wonder if Proclus' Limit and Unlimited are simply a leftover causal model from the previous tradition, where the henads do the real causal work.

However as we will see, Proclus uses the Limit and Unlimited to explain the co-inherence of unity and plurality in all beings, which is a function that the henads do not fulfill—since their main, if only, effect is unity. The Unlimited properly becomes the principle of plurality, while the Limit becomes responsible for all instances of unity and determination within any given manifestation of power or plurality. We see this spelled out in certain examples from the *Parmenides Commentary*:

For it even appears that the Limit and the Unlimited, being first principles (ἀρχαί) of both the Forms and all beings, establish in divided things 'limit' (πέρας) as the monad, and 'unlimitedness' (ἀπειρία) as the plurality: in continuous magnitudes, limit establishes the point, unlimitedness extension; in ratios<sup>142</sup> (λόγοις) limit establishes equality, unlimitedness

139 Cf. *In Parm.* 1048,1–2.

140 See O'Meara (1989) 45 for Iamblichus' reference of the Limit and Unlimited as 'first principles' (ἀρχαί) of what O'Meara calls 'mathematical reality' (οὐσία). This gets picked up in a systematic way for Syrianus (cf. 136–137).

141 Cf. p. 69–72.

142 Or 'proportions'. I take it that the idea here is, e.g., A:B::C:D. Limit is thus responsible for the analogous relation holding—i.e. equality—while Unlimited is responsible for the difference that characterizes the distinct terms *qua* distinct—i.e. unequal.

inequality;<sup>143</sup> and in qualities limit establishes likeness, unlimitedness unlikeness. That the more and less belong to the kind of the Unlimited is proven for us by the Socrates in the *Philebus*,<sup>144</sup> but everywhere the image of the Limit takes hold of what is presented to it of unlimitedness and makes limited those things that had until then been unlimited by virtue of their own nature.

*In Parm.* 937,30–938,8<sup>145</sup>

καὶ γὰρ εἰκότατον, ἀρχαὶ τῶν εἰδῶν ὄντε καὶ πάντων τῶν ὄντων, τὸ πέρασ καὶ ἄπειρον ἐν μὲν διηρημένοις ὑποστήσαι τὴν μονάδα τὸ πέρασ, καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ἢ ἀπειρία· ἐν δὲ συνεχέσι τὸ πέρασ τὸ σημεῖον, ἢ δὲ ἀπειρία τὴν διάστασιν· ἐν δὲ λόγοις τὸ πέρασ τὴν ἰσότητα, τὴν δὲ ἀνισότητα ἢ ἀπειρία· καὶ ἐν ποιῶσι τὸ πέρασ τὴν ὁμοιότητα, τὴν δὲ ἀνομοιότητα ἢ ἀπειρία. τὸ γοῦν μᾶλλον καὶ ἦττον τοῦ ἀπείρου γένους εἶναι καὶ ὁ ἐν Φιλήβῳ Σωκράτης ἡμᾶς ἐδίδαξε· πανταχοῦ δὲ ἢ τοῦ πέρατος εἰκῶν τὴν τῆς ἀπειρίας καταλαμβάνουσα δόσιν πεπερασμένα ποιεῖ τὰ τέως ἄπειρα κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν φύσιν.

Proclus demonstrates the existence of the Limit and Unlimited first by showing their instantiations in the different categories of being, as continuous magnitudes, ratios (λόγους), and qualities. Proclus gives a more extensive list of instantiations later on,<sup>146</sup> from the lowest level with prime matter (as unlimited) and enmattered forms (as limited), to progressively higher levels toward the levels of Soul, Intellect, and the principles of Time and Eternity. In both cases the instances of limit and unlimited are simultaneous: an instance of 'limit' also implies its corresponding 'unlimited' aspect, yet they are both distinct elements in each being. Opposition is a key aspect one sees in all the instances of limitedness and unlimitedness. One may here detect an echo of *ET* Prop. 5, where Proclus indicates opposition between the participated 'One' and the plurality receiving unity. Prop. 5, in this respect, anticipates the basic 'horizontal'<sup>147</sup> opposition that exists after the One-itself, between the Limit and Unlimited, and is reflected at all lower levels of being.

143 Dillon/Morrow read this line as: ἐν δὲ λόγοις τὸ πέρασ τὴν ἰσότητα, τοὺς δὲ λόγους ἢ ἀπειρία (thus, 'unlimitedness establishes other ratios'). Here I follow Steel's emendation, 'τὴν δὲ ἀνισότητα', which makes more sense of the contrast Proclus seems to aim at.

144 Cf. Plato, *Phil.* 24a6–25a4.

145 See also *In Crat.* 42,3–4 for a restatement of the same idea, the Limit as the 'image' determining the Unlimited. Cf. Chlup (2012) 78.

146 *In Parm.* 1119,5–1123,14.

147 Cf. Van Riel (2001a) 151–152.

Proclus' demonstration of 'limit' and 'unlimited' as the most general aspects in all beings leads him to make two claims: first that the principle Being-itself paradigmatically embodies these two aspects within itself;<sup>148</sup> and second, that there must be two prior principles—Limit-itself and Unlimited-itself—that explain the two aspects found in Being-itself.<sup>149</sup> Being thus mediates the production of all instances of 'limit' and 'unlimited' through itself to all subsequent beings. In turn, since Being is only composed of these two properties, it is both the closest entity to the One—inasmuch as it is not composed of further elements—and the first plurality insofar as it simply is composed. As a corollary to this, in *ET Prop.* 86 Proclus establishes that all 'real being' (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) is infinite in its character, albeit in terms of power (δύναμις) rather than quantity or magnitude,<sup>150</sup> since the latter two are correlated to division and partition. These two in turn imply a weakening of power for a given entity, whereas the closer to unity a being is, the more unified and therefore the more power it will have.<sup>151</sup> An important corollary from this is that Proclus links

148 *ET Prop.* 89, 82,2–6: 'For if [real Being] has unlimited power, it is clear that it is unlimited, and by this it has existed from the Unlimited. And if it is partless and has the form of unity, by this it has partaken of the limit: for that which partakes of unity has been limited. But [Being] is together partless and unlimited in power. Every real being therefore is derived from limit and unlimited'. (εἰ γὰρ ἀπειροδύναμόν ἐστι, δῆλον ὅτι ἄπειρόν ἐστι, καὶ ταύτῃ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπείρου ὑφέστηκεν. εἰ δὲ ἀμερὲς καὶ ἐνοειδές, ταύτῃ πέρατος μετέλιπε· τὸ γὰρ ἐνὸς μετασχὼν πεπερασται. ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀμερὲς ἅμα καὶ ἀπειροδύναμόν ἐστιν. ἐκ πέρατος ἄρα ἐστὶ καὶ ἀπείρου πᾶν τὸ ὄντως ὄν.)

149 *ET Prop.* 90: 'Before all entities which are constituted from limit and unlimited exist the first Limit and first Unlimited according to themselves. For if prior to the entities of a given thing exist beings from themselves as common to all and principle causes, not of certain things but of all things simply, it is necessary that before what is derived from both there exist the first Limit and the first Unlimited. For the limit in the mixed has partaken of the unlimited, and the unlimited of the limit, while the first of each is not something else than what it is. Therefore it is necessary that the first Unlimited not have the form of the limit, and likewise that the first Limit [not have] the form of the unlimited. Before the mixed then exist [the Limit and Unlimited] primarily'. (πάντων τῶν ἐκ πέρατος καὶ ἀπειρίας ὑποστάντων προϋπάρχει καθ' αὐτὰ τὸ πρῶτον πέρας καὶ ἡ πρώτη ἀπειρία. εἰ γὰρ τῶν τινὸς ὄντων τὰ ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν ὄντα προϋφέστηκεν ὡς κοινὰ πάντων καὶ ἀρχηγικά αἵτια καὶ μὴ τινῶν, ἀλλὰ πάντων ἀπλῶς, δεῖ πρὸ τοῦ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν εἶναι τὸ πρῶτον πέρας καὶ τὸ πρῶτως ἄπειρον. τὸ γὰρ ἐν τῷ μικτῷ πέρας ἀπειρίας ἐστὶ μετελιγφὸς καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον πέρατος· τὸ δὲ πρῶτον ἐκάστου οὐκ ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ ὅ ἐστιν· οὐκ ἄρα δεῖ περατοειδές εἶναι τὸ πρῶτως ἄπειρον καὶ ἀπειροειδές τὸ πρῶτον πέρας· πρὸ τοῦ μικτοῦ ἄρα ταῦτα πρῶτως.)

150 *ET Prop.* 86, 78,19–20: 'Every real being is unlimited, neither according to plurality, nor according to size, but according to power alone' (πᾶν τὸ ὄντως ὄν ἄπειρόν ἐστιν οὔτε κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος οὔτε κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν μόνην).

151 *ET Prop.* 86, 78,30–80,11.

unlimitedness to unity: what is 'more' unlimited in terms of power approaches closer to pure unity.<sup>152</sup>

This leads to an important question about the status of the Limit compared to the Unlimited. Whereas any unlimitedness implies a gradation of unity, depending on how divided or undivided it is, the Limit seems to imply simple unity. One might wonder whether the Limit *is* the One,<sup>153</sup> or if it is rather correlated to the henads. An indication in this direction lies in *ET Prop.* 92, where Proclus establishes the Unlimited as the cause, not just of all instances of power, but all beings:

*Every plurality of unlimited powers is dependent on one, first unlimitedness (ἀπειρία), which is not a certain power as participated, and not existing in things having power, but it is according to itself, not being the power of a certain participant, but the cause of all beings.*

For even if Being itself possesses the first power, yet it is not power-itself (αὐτοδύναμις). For it also has limit; but the first power is unlimitedness.

<sup>152</sup> *ET Prop.* 95, 84,28–35: 'Every power which is more unitive (ένικωτέρα) is more infinite than that which is more plural. For if the first unlimitedness is nearest the One, then of the [two] powers that which is more akin to the One is unlimited in a greater degree than that which falls away from it. For as it becomes plural it loses the form of unity, in which it remains to transcend the other entities, concentrated in partlessness. For even in things which are divided, powers are multiplied as being brought together, while enfeebled by being divided (μεριζόμεναι): (πάσα δύναμις ένικωτέρα οὐσα τῆς πληθυνομένης ἀπειροτέρα. εἰ γάρ ἡ πρώτη ἀπειρία τοῦ ἐνὸς ἐγγυτάτω, καὶ τῶν δυνάμεων ἡ τῷ ἐνὶ συγγενεστέρα τῆς ἀφισταμένης ἐκείνου μειζόνως ἀπειρος· πληθυνομένη γάρ ἀπόλλυσι τὸ ἐνοειδές, ἐν ᾧ μένουσα τὴν πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας εἶχεν ὑπεροχὴν, συνεχομένη διὰ τὴν ἀμέρειαν. καὶ γάρ ἐν τοῖς μεριστοῖς αἱ δυνάμεις συναγόμεναι μὲν πολλαπλασιάζονται, μεριζόμεναι δὲ ἀμυδροῦνται.) One sees here the principle of causal synonymy from *ET Prop.* 28, where Proclus argues that the Unlimited's unity is the result of being an effect of the One. (This could also be in addition to an implicit reference to Plato's *Phil.* 26c5–d3, where Socrates claims that the class of the Unlimited maintains the appearance of unity. Cf. earlier p. 160 n.17.) With this aspect in mind, Damascius makes a subtle but crucial change with the Unlimited: for him the Unlimited exists without differentiation, but it is *not* characterized by unity in its subsistence (ὑπαρξίς) or character (ιδιότης)—in fact, he says it is 'pure plurality'—but rather it has unity by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν). (Cf. p. 274 n.144.) In passages like *ET Prop.* 95, Proclus, by comparison, seems to make the Unlimited 'one' by its character and subsistence as a henad.

<sup>153</sup> As Berthold of Moosburg actually interprets Proclus: see below, n. 156. Cf. King (2016) 159: 'Berthold's interpretation of the Propositions on the primal Limit and Unlimited follows from his views about the six-fold order of gods. Although *Prop.* 90 reads "*prima finitas*", Berthold there identifies the One with "*prime finitas*" and presents this as the teaching of Dionysius, who speaks of the One "limiting" (*terminans*) all things, "above infinity" (*ante omne infinitatem*), even above unity and number'.



For unlimited powers are such through participation in unlimitedness. Unlimitedness-itself (αὐτοαπειρία) will then be before all powers, through which Being is also unlimited in power (ἀπειροδύναμον) and all things participate unlimitedness. Neither is the First unlimitedness—for it is the measure of all things, existing as the Good and One—nor is it Being—for this is ‘unlimited’, but not unlimitedness. Therefore between the First and Being is unlimitedness, cause of all things unlimited in power and cause of every unlimitedness in beings.

*ET Prop. 92, 82,23–35*

πάν τὸ πλήθος τῶν ἀπειρῶν δυνάμεων μιᾷ ἐξήπται τῆς πρώτης ἀπειρίας, ἥτις οὐχ ὡς μετεχομένη δύναμις ἐστίν, οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς δυναμένοις ὑφέστηκεν, ἀλλὰ καθ’ αὐτήν, οὐ τινὸς οὕσα δύναμις τοῦ μετέχοντος, ἀλλὰ πάντων αἰτία τῶν ὄντων.

εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὸ ὄν αὐτὸ τὸ πρῶτον ἔχει δύναμιν, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ αὐτοδύναμις. ἔχει γὰρ καὶ πέρας· ἡ δὲ πρώτη δύναμις ἀπειρία ἐστίν. αἱ γὰρ ἀπειροὶ δυνάμεις διὰ μετουσίαν ἀπειρίας ἀπειροὶ· ἡ οὖν αὐτοαπειρία πρὸ πασῶν ἔσται δυνάμεων, δι’ ἣν καὶ τὸ ὄν ἀπειροδύναμον καὶ πάντα μετέσχευ ἀπειρίας. οὔτε γὰρ τὸ πρῶτον ἡ ἀπειρία (μέτρον γὰρ πάντων ἐκεῖνο, τάγαθὸν ὑπάρχον καὶ ἓν) οὔτε τὸ ὄν (ἀπειρον γὰρ τοῦτο, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀπειρία)· μεταξὺ ἄρα τοῦ πρώτου καὶ τοῦ ὄντος ἡ ἀπειρία, πάντων αἰτία τῶν ἀπειροδυνάμων καὶ αἰτία πάσης τῆς ἐν τοῖς οὐσίῃ ἀπειρίας.

We should notice here that Proclus does not place the Unlimited (which he distinguishes as the ‘first unlimitedness’, τῆς πρώτης ἀπειρίας) between the *Limit* and Being, but rather between the *One* and Being. Proclus’ reason to deny ‘unlimitedness’ to the One is that the latter is the ‘measure of all things’, contrary to the notion of being unlimited.<sup>154</sup> However one would expect the Limit to fit this definition by its name, especially given the context of the previous propositions that consider the Unlimited in relation to the Limit. In this respect Prop. 92 presents the Limit as a mirror image of the One, and, if anything, Proclus seems to treat the two synonymously—just as we saw for the One standing in for the Unlimited as the cause of matter. We

<sup>154</sup> Later in *ET Prop. 117, 102,28–104,4*, Proclus says that every henad is a ‘measure of all beings’ (μέτρον τῶν ὄντων), which also suggests a relation between the henads and the Limit. This is further suggested by the proposition’s language, where the plurality of beings are described as indefinite by their nature (τῇ ἐαυτῶν φύσει ἀόριστα ὄντα), while the henads impose determination and unity as measures. This anticipates Van Riel (2001b)’s interpretation, where the henads are ‘modalities’ or instantiations of the Limit.

should further note Proclus' language for the Unlimited being the 'cause of all beings' (πάντων αἰτία τῶν ὄντων). In this sense Proclus makes the Unlimited analogous to the henads as an intermediate cause between the 'One' (or Limit) and Being, while the Limit appears to be separate, or implicitly identified with the One here. As we will see, this comes to reflect the two aspects of limit and unlimited found together in all henads: as 'one' (represented by the aspect of limit) the henads remain separate from their effects, but in terms of their different powers (represented by the aspect of unlimited) they function as mediated causes between pure unity and plurality. Both of these aspects, once again, will be seen to be instantiations of the two principles of Limit and Unlimited, where they paradigmatically embody these two traits.<sup>155</sup>

#### 4.4.1 *The One and the Limit/Unlimited in PT 111.8–9*

The ambiguity between the One and Limit is still rather curious. Proclus does not clarify the differentiation between the two in the *Elements* as he does in other works. In fact this leads a late Latin Scholastic commentator, Berthold of Moosburg, to identify the One with the Limit (*prime finitas*),<sup>156</sup> although Proclus' emphasis on the One as unparticipated in the *Elements* would seem to count against this. The ambiguity could also be a result of Proclus' characterization of the One as ineffable in itself, so that what is often referred to as the 'One' is relegated to the Limit, since it is participated rather than the One-itself.<sup>157</sup>

Given this, *Platonic Theology* 111.8–9 clarifies the relationship between the Limit and the One by making the Limit, as well as the Unlimited, 'manifestations' (ἐκφάνσεις) of the One.<sup>158</sup> Proclus here explicitly references the *Philebus*' four-fold framework to explain the structure between the One and the other principles:

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Van Riel (2001b) for this interpretation (see also previous note).

<sup>156</sup> Berthold, *Expositio* 90a, 154,16–155,39; 159h, 198,291–298. For Berthold, the first god (or henad—*prima unitas*) is then the Unlimited (*prime virtus, infinitas*)—which would match Prop. 92's analogous placement of the Unlimited as an intermediate cause between the One and Being, like the henads. For further discussion on this, see King (2016) 156–163.

<sup>157</sup> *PT* 111.8, 32,8–15. This leads Gersh (2014b) 89–90 to claim that *ET* Prop's. 1–13 are about the Limit rather than the actual One-itself (about which I disagree with him: see p. 169 n.40). Although he does not extend this to other cases we have discussed, like Prop. 72 on the 'One' and matter, or in this case for Prop. 92, Gersh's argument may carry over to these cases.

<sup>158</sup> *PT* 111.9, 36,14–15.

Accordingly, Socrates in the *Philebus* says that God is one who brings to existence (ὑποστάτης) 'limit' and 'unlimitedness' and through these he has produced all beings as mixture, since the nature of beings has been interweaved from limiting and unlimited principles according to Philolaus. If then beings are from these, it is clear that they have given substance before beings, and if secondary entities have participated in [limit and unlimitedness] having been mixed, as unmixed they pre-exist (προϋπάρχουσιν) the entire universe (τῶν ὅλων).

PT III.8, 30,19–26

λέγει τοίνυν ὁ ἐν Φιλήβῳ Σωκράτης ὡς ἄρα θεὸς πέρατός ἐστι καὶ ἀπειρίας ὑποστάτης καὶ διὰ τούτων ἅπαντα τὰ ὄντα μιγνύς παρήγαγε, κατὰ τὸν Φιλόλαον ἐκ περαινότων καὶ ἀπείρων τῆς τῶν ὄντων φύσεως συμπεπλεγμένης. εἰ τοίνυν ἐκ τούτων τὰ ὄντα, δῆλον ὅτι πρὸ τῶν ὄντων ὑφεστήκασιν, καὶ εἰ μεμιγμένων αὐτῶν τὰ δεύτερα μετείληφεν, ἀμιγεῖς αὐταὶ τῶν ὅλων προϋπάρχουσιν.

As we have seen before, the Limit and Unlimited are established as the two causes *prior* to beings, as the henads were also shown to be. By contrast to the *Elements'* propositions, which do not provide an explicit causal relation between the two principles and the One, Proclus in PT III.8 uses the *Philebus* to argue for a distinction between 'God'—standing in for the *Philebus* 'Cause'—and the Limit and Unlimited—which Proclus takes to be derived from the Cause.

As in the *Elements*, one would think that Proclus interprets 'God' to correlate with the One-itself (τὸ αὐτόεν), however after our passage Proclus says that the first principle is not the 'truly One' (ἀληθῶς ἓν) since it transcends even unity.<sup>159</sup> Although one might take this to be an implicit affirmation of a purely ineffable entity, like Damascius' Ineffable, Proclus here seems to be merely affirming the conclusion of the *Parmenides'* first hypothesis, where unity is denied of the One.<sup>160</sup> This would also still agree with an interpretation of the One as unparticipated, insofar as the 'truly One' from the vantage point of Being indicates a participated 'One'. In this respect Proclus must mean the Limit, as we will see shortly.

159 PT III.8, 31,12–13: 'Neither is the First [principle] as truly 'One', for it is even greater than the One as has been said many times' (οὔτε τὸ πρῶτον ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐστὶν ἓν, κρείττον γὰρ ἐστὶν, ὡς πολλάκις εἴρηται, καὶ τοῦ ἐνός).

160 Plato, *Parm.* 141e10–142a1. See PT II.10, 65,1–7, which claims that Being participates in the One 'as a single, ineffable cause'.

We have already seen Proclus mention that the Unlimited is the proximate cause of all things from *ET* Prop. 92. *PT* III.8 follows up this position by making the Unlimited an intermediate cause between the Limit, or the participated 'One', and Being. Whereas in *ET* Prop. 90 the Limit and Unlimited are portrayed as opposed principles, here Proclus considers the Unlimited as an externalized power for the Limit, as a particular 'One' (or as he words it, 'this one', τοῦτο τὸ ἓν), mediating between unity and being:

But if this 'one' is a cause and able to bring existence to Being (ὑποστατικὸν τοῦ ὄντος), power should exist in it, as generative of Being. For every producer produces according to its power which has obtained existence (ὑπόστασιν) as a middle term between the producer and produced things, and which is, on the one hand, a procession and, as it were, extension of [the producer], and a generative cause having been placed before [the products]. [...] Accordingly this 'one' which pre-exists power, and the first which is pre-established from the unparticipated and unknowable cause of the universe (τῶν ὅλων), Socrates in the *Philebus* calls by name 'Limit', while the generative power of Being [he calls] Unlimitedness. In this way he says in those things, 'we were saying somewhere that God has shown, in one regard, limit belonging to beings, in another regard, the unlimited'.<sup>161</sup>

*PT* III.8, 31,18–23; 32,2–7

ἀλλ' εἰ αἰτίον ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἐν καὶ ὑποστατικὸν τοῦ ὄντος, δύναμις ἂν ἐν αὐτῷ γεννητικὴ τοῦ ὄντος ὑπάρχοι. πᾶν γὰρ τὸ παράγον κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παράγει δύναμιν, μέσσην τοῦ παράγοντος καὶ τῶν παραγομένων ὑπόστασιν λαχοῦσαν καὶ τοῦ μὲν οὖσαν πρόοδον καὶ οἶον ἐκτένειαν, τοῦ δὲ αἰτίαν γεννητικὴν προτεταγμένην. ... τὸ μὲν τοίνυν ἐν τοῦτο τὸ προϋπάρχον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ πρῶτον ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμεθέκτου καὶ ἀγνώστου τῶν ὅλων αἰτίας προϋποστάν, πέρας ὃ ἐν Φιλήβῳ Σωκράτης ἀποκαλεῖ, τὴν δὲ γεννητικὴν τοῦ ὄντος δύναμιν ἀπειρίαν. λέγει δὲ οὕτως ἐν ἐκείνοις· τὸν θεὸν ἐλέγομέν που τὸ μὲν πέρας τῶν ὄντων δεῖξαι, τὸ δὲ ἄπειρον.

Of interest is Proclus' argument that there must be a power (δύναμις) 'in' the 'one' which produces Being, while he then shows that that power must be externalized as the Unlimited. Proclus argues this on the grounds that power is a middle term between the producer and its effect, where it provides a bridge

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Plato, *Phil.* 23c9–10.

between both terms.<sup>162</sup> Power then cannot be a separate, unrelated entity, as one could potentially think of the Unlimited in *ET* Prop. 90, but it must be relative to the first producer of Being—thus the power of the ‘one’, or implicitly the Limit.<sup>163</sup> On the one hand this implies that there is no true separation between the Limit and Unlimited, since the latter is the power *of* the Limit.<sup>164</sup> On the other hand Proclus still makes the Unlimited a separate entity, and not simply a part of the Limit’s being, since it is still ‘power-itself’ by which all other powers participate in power. We should bear in mind these two, different ways that Proclus expresses the Unlimited, since Prop. 90’s characterization of the Limit and Unlimited’s opposed natures implicitly conflicts with *PT* 111.8’s description—an issue we will revisit in the following section.

Finally in *PT* 111.9 Proclus clarifies not only that the first god, or the One-itself, brings to existence the Limit and Unlimited, but that the two are ‘manifestations’ (ἐκφάνσεις) of the One, and therefore henads:

Wherefore Socrates, since he makes clear in what way the mode of generation differs for both the two principles and the Mixed, says that God ‘revealed’ (δείξαι)<sup>165</sup> the Limit and the Unlimited—for they are henads constituted from the One and, as it were, manifestations (ἐκφάνσεις) from the unparticipated and very first unity (ἐνώσεως)—while [God] makes

162 Here one can see in the background Proclus’ standard causal triad of ὑπαρξίς, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια: cf. earlier discussion in p. 91–92. For an elaboration of this triad, see Proclus, *In Alc.* 83,20–84,11 and the note by Westerink–Saffrey in *PT* 111.1, 6,1. (Cf. Martijn and Gerson (2017) 55 n. 59.)

163 See later *PT* 111.9, 39,11–14: ‘For everywhere power (δύναμις) is the cause of generative processions and of all plurality: power as hidden [is the cause of] plurality as hidden, while power in act and which manifests itself [is the cause of] complete [plurality]’. (ἡ γὰρ δύναμις αἰτία πανταχοῦ τῶν γονίμων προόδων καὶ παντὸς πλήθους, ἡ μὲν κρυφία δύναμις τοῦ κρυφίου πλήθους, ἡ δὲ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν καὶ ἑαυτὴν ἐκφάνασα, τοῦ παντελοῦς.)

164 For the henads, power is implicit within their subsistence (ὑπαρξίς), unlike the Limit’s power with the Unlimited: see *ET* Prop. 121, esp. 106,18–20: ‘Thus the primary power is in the gods, not dominant over one aspect and not another, but pre-embracing in itself the powers of all beings alike’. (ἔστι δὴ οὖν ἡ πρωτίστη δύναμις ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς, οὐ τῶν μὲν κρατοῦσα τῶν δὲ οὐ, πάντων δὲ ἐξ ἴσου προλαβοῦσα τὰς δυνάμεις ἐν ἑαυτῇ τῶν ὄντων.) Note the similarity in description to the Unlimited’s functionality. Van Riel (2001b) 428–429 uses the correlation for his interpretation of the Limit and Unlimited as paradigmatic henads embodying the two aspects of unity and power (respectively) in all subsequent henads.

165 Cf. Plato, *Phil.* 23c9–10. One should, however, bear in mind that Proclus is taking δείξαι in a productive sense, as his interpretation bears out; whereas in Plato, δείξαι might just be used to show that ‘God’ ‘shows’, i.e. demonstrates, the existence of two principles. This latter sense would not necessitate a causal, productive interpretation of δείξαι, as Proclus wants it.

and composes together the Mixed through the first principles.<sup>166</sup> In this way making is more inferior to manifesting (ἐκφανεῖν), and generation to manifestation, by which way it may be said that the Mixed obtained procession from the One, having been let down among the two principles.

PT III.9, 36,10–19

διὸ δὴ καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης ἐνδεικνύμενος ὅπως ἐξήλλακται τῆς ἀπογεννήσεως ὁ τρόπος ἐπὶ τε τῶν δυεῖν ἀρχῶν καὶ τοῦ μικτοῦ, τὸ μὲν πέρας καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον δεῖξαί φησι τὸν θεόν (ἐνάδες γὰρ εἰσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνὸς ὑποστᾶσαι καὶ οἷον ἐκφάνσεις ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμεθέκτου καὶ πρωτίστης ἐνώσεως), τὸ δὲ μικτὸν ποιεῖν καὶ συγκεραννύναι διὰ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν. ὅσω δὴ τὸ ποιεῖν τοῦ ἐκφαίνειν καταδεέστερον καὶ ἡ γέννησις τῆς ἐκφάνσεως, τοσούτῳ δῆπου τὸ μικτὸν ὑφειμένην ἔλαχε τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνὸς πρόοδον τῶν δύο ἀρχῶν.

Two points stand out in Proclus' explication: in making the Limit and Unlimited 'manifestations' of the One, Proclus uses this to show that the Limit and Unlimited are 'henads'; and second, he notes the difference between 'manifestation' (ἐκφανεῖν, ἐκφάνσεις) and 'making'/'generation' (ποιεῖν, γέννησις), where the latter is inferior to the former, yet both are differentiated from the One. 'Manifestation' then implies that the same nature or character is preserved between the One and the Limit and Unlimited, which supports their being called 'henads', while 'procession' only applies to the Mixed which is generated from the Limit and Unlimited. One may recall *In Parm.* 745,14–17, here with the three kinds of 'procession' between the henads ('by unity') and beings ('by sameness' and 'by likeness'). Proclus may be referring back here, although notably he does not say that the Limit and Unlimited are 'processions' as implied for the henads in the *Parm. Commentary*. On the one hand this implies that the Limit and Unlimited are 'henads' in the same sense as those we discussed in the last section, which in turn suggests that they are *functionally* like the henads as participated intermediaries between the One and Being. On the other hand, one should be careful here: while Proclus may use the same word and language with 'henad', it is not apparent that Proclus uses the same sense for the Limit and Unlimited.

Furthermore, PT III.8–9 do not explicitly show how the Limit and Unlimited fit in as 'henads' in the same sense as those discussed just earlier in PT III.1–6, which directly correlate with the henads discussed in *ET Prop's.* 113–163.<sup>167</sup>

166 Compare with our previous discussion on *ET Prop.* 159, esp. 138,30–31, which also describes the Limit and Unlimited as πρῶται ἀρχαί.

167 This discrepancy in language between these passages leads D'Ancona Costa (1992) (esp. 293) to claim that Proclus maintains three differing references behind Proclus' use

One would expect that Proclus provides more explanation here or afterward for how the Limit and Unlimited fit in with the structure of henads that he earlier discussed. Unfortunately this detail is not clarified in the remaining passages. We are also still left with *ET Prop.* 159, discussed earlier, where the Limit and Unlimited are principles over the different orders of henads. This would imply that Proclus sees the two principles in a different sense as the henads. This ambiguity between these two sets becomes an important issue, as we will next discuss.

#### 4.5 Reconciling Causal Models, and a Remaining Impasse

In the previous two sections we surveyed the two causal models involved with the One's production of Being: i.e. the henads, and the Limit/Unlimited. We have seen Proclus call both the 'first principles' (πρῶται ἀρχαί) of all beings, as intermediate causes between the One and Being. And yet how the two sets fit together is not clear, as we saw in the last section.

We should briefly sum up the purpose that the two causal models serve. As we saw from *ET Prop.* 6, the henads function as the direct causes of unity for the first unified group of entities—i.e. the intelligibles as the highest level of being.<sup>168</sup> The Limit and Unlimited, on the other hand, were posited in *ET Prop.*'s 89–90 to explain the characters of unlimited power and generation, on the one hand, and unity and limit, on the other, in Being and all lower beings. Both sets of principles ultimately convey properties that derive from the One, either in terms of unity or productivity, both of which belong properly to the One. While the henads and the Limit/Unlimited share this common description, both differ in the following way: the henads only explain the unity of *specific* intelligibles (i.e. as the source of the Forms, in themselves), while the Limit and Unlimited explain the dynamic of actuality and power in *all* intelligibles (and derivatively all beings at the different levels).<sup>169</sup>

This last part raises a problem which is directly related to a problem we also saw from *ET Prop.* 159. It is worth stating the two problems in brief:

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of the term, 'henad': (1) as pertaining to the Limit/Unlimited in themselves (as in *PT* 111.9); (2) as pertaining to the intelligibles acted on by the Limit/Unlimited (as in *ET Prop.* 159); and (3) as pertaining to the entities derived directly from the One 'by unity' (καθ' ἐνωσιν) (as in e.g. *In Parm.* 644,9–10, and *PT* 111.3).

<sup>168</sup> Cf. *ET Prop.* 135, esp. 120,1–3.

<sup>169</sup> On this see D'Ancona Costa (1992), esp. 292–293.



1. Both the henads and the Limit and Unlimited are derived from the One, but they have distinct functions and therefore different planes of influence. Are the two models identical to, or coordinated with, each other? Or are they separate?
2. *ET* Prop. 159 claims that the 'orders of the gods' are derived from the Limit and Unlimited. This suggests that the henads, by proxy, are derived from the Limit and Unlimited, and therefore that they are composed of the distinct characters of limit and unlimited. But this would contradict their character as pure 'ones': as a result, they should *not* be derived or composed.

With problem (1), we should recall *PT* III.9 calling the Limit and Unlimited 'henads' since they are 'manifestations' (ἐκφάνσεις) from the One. However in the passage Proclus does not show how this relates to his previous discussion on the henads in *PT* III.1–6, or especially the *Elements'* propositions on the henads. The discrepancy between these two senses of 'henad' is reflected in *ET* Prop. 159, where the Limit and Unlimited implicitly transcend the henads, inasmuch as they compose the divine orders in which the henads are oriented. As a result, the Limit and Unlimited cannot be 'henads' in the same sense as the henads of *ET* Prop's. 151–159. Or if they are, then their role must be distinct in some way.

With problem (2), Prop. 159 specifies that the *orders* are derived from the Limit and Unlimited, rather than the henads *themselves*. This would partially resolve the issue, since the passage does not directly say that the henads are composed—a mis-construal that Nicholas of Methone's and Dodds' formulations do not account for.<sup>170</sup> However there is the remaining issue of how the henads are grouped or coordinated within each order, if each order is, in turn, determined by the Limit and Unlimited. One cannot completely detach the henads, altogether or taken individually, from some kind of coordination with the Limit/Unlimited, even if they remain otherwise self-complete and autonomous in their being.

While a number of contemporary positions have attempted to address this difficulty, here we may consider one possible solution.<sup>171</sup> We have seen that the

<sup>170</sup> Cf. earlier p. 201–202.

<sup>171</sup> Among other contemporary discussions on the Limit/Unlimited's relation to the henads, we can list three predominant positions: (i) they are parallel but separate causal models, thus no relation between both (represented by D'Ancona Costa (1992)); (ii) the Limit/Unlimited are paradigmatic henads, but have no causal relation, in themselves, to the ensuing henads (represented by Van Riel (2001b)); and (iii) the Limit/Unlimited are not separate principles, but ultimately aspects of beings as such, and stand for two aspects seen in all henads (represented by Butler (2008b) and (2005)). I argue for a position,

henads are characterized by their subsistence (ὑπαρξις), as purely 'one', and their respective unique character (ιδιότης), by which each is virtually distinguished. While neither aspect constitutes a true difference, the unique character of each henad is nevertheless manifested within its respective effects in being. The 'orders of gods' then describe the effects that come after the henads, while they ultimately depend on the commonality shared between the different characters (ιδιότητες) of the henads, according to which the henads' respective kinds of effects come to be. A henad that belongs to the 'generative' order must have that attribute as part of its ιδιότης, while a henad of the 'paternal' order must also have that attribute as part of its ιδιότης. While both henads by their subsistence do not depend on each other, they are still determined in relation to each other by their respective ιδιότης.<sup>172</sup>

What this finally suggests is that the henads are 'composed', in a certain way, from the Limit and Unlimited strictly according to their characters, while they are *not* composed according to their ὑπαρξις, i.e. their mode of existence as unities. To understand the 'composition' of the henads' ιδιότητες from the two principles, we should look again at how the henads proceed from the One 'by unity' (καθ' ἑνωσιν). Their procession must be contextualized with Proclus' claim that the henads are entirely 'self-complete' (αὐτοτελές) and not produced in any respect.<sup>173</sup> If we pay attention to Proclus' language in *PT* III.4, we find that the henads, each in exercising its causality through itself (δι' ἑαυτοῦ), do so in reference to the unparticipated One.<sup>174</sup> Thus the One functions as a point of reference, as it were—in this sense a principle of coordination—by which the henads produce their effects. In turn, we may see the Limit/Unlimited's 'composition' of the henads' ιδιότητες accordingly: the henads in their varying characters are structured and classified through the Limit and Unlimited as

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discussed below, that mediates between these three: Van Riel is correct on his paradigmatic model view, and Butler is right to emphasize the autonomy of the henads in light of the limit/unlimited as characters pertaining to the henads' powers and their effects; however both fail to see the kind of causality the Limit/Unlimited exercise with respect to the henads, which D'Ancona rightly observes (although, where I do not agree, she thinks that Proclus' claim that the Limit/Unlimited act on 'henads' must mean only the intelligibles, and not the 'henads' which transcend Being). For further analysis and discussion of these positions amidst the problem of Proclus' two causal models, see Greig (2020).

<sup>172</sup> See *In Parm.* 936 ff. where Proclus discusses how the henads relate to each other inasmuch as they are self-complete and depend solely on themselves.

<sup>173</sup> A point emphasized by Butler, e.g. in (2005) 97–98, (2008a) 97–98. For Butler this results in his controversial claim that the One-itself has no distinct existence as a principle, apart from the henads in their unity: among others, see (2008a) 98 and (2003) 168–169.

<sup>174</sup> *PT* III.4, 16,1–7.

similar 'points of reference' for their causal powers—and in this respect their *ιδιότητες*.

On this reading, the Limit and the Unlimited would be responsible for the different, unique characters of the henads, while the henads still proceed directly from the One according to their subsistence as unities. The henads would proceed from the One alongside the Limit and Unlimited as the 'first' henads after the One, while all henads after the Limit and Unlimited are derived in coordination with the two principles. In this respect both the Limit and Unlimited, as well as all subsequent henads, are the same by their subsistence, while the Limit/Unlimited encompass within themselves the diversity of the different orders and particular *ιδιότητες* of each henad. Yet we must also acknowledge an important difference: all subsequent henads after the Limit and Unlimited are composed in their *ιδιότης*, whereas the Limit/Unlimited, as the first henads, are the principles of that composition.

Given this initial solution, we are still left with an aporetic tension. One issue is the opposition between the two principles below the One: as henads, the Limit and Unlimited are both 'one' in the same sense as the One-itself, yet how they acquire their particular, opposed characters as 'limit' and 'unlimited' is unclear. On the one hand Proclus construes the Unlimited as the power of the Limit, which suggests that the Unlimited is subordinated under the Limit, and in turn that the two principles are only *relatively* opposed. This would suggest that the Unlimited emerges from the Limit as its corresponding power, while it makes the One only responsible for producing the Limit which mirrors the One's character of unity. On the other hand, Proclus makes the Unlimited a separate principle from the Limit, and in *PT* III.9 he states that the One directly brings forth the Limit *and* the Unlimited. If they come forth separately from the One, this suggests that the One pre-contains the opposed characters of the Limit and Unlimited. But as we have seen, Proclus would reject this suggestion: if the One has nothing of 'all things' in itself, the One should also not have the opposed characters that belong to the Limit and Unlimited which come after it.

Proclus' framework for the One thus involves a tension that is ultimately left unresolved. The One's causality ensures its transcendence and its production of the characteristic unity of the henads (as well as the Limit/Unlimited). In this regard, the One remains a cause of all things, by delegation, without implying in itself either plurality (as found in Being) or the two-fold characters of limit and unlimited, responsible for plurality (as found in the henads and Limit/Unlimited). However the One's causality cannot explain how the Limit and Unlimited come forth from the One as distinct characters, and thereby how the other henads come forth in conjunction with the Limit/Unlimited.

How we go from the One to the henads leaves us at an impasse under Proclus' framework. One might perhaps look back at the model from the *Ten Problems on Providence* and suggest an analogous case here:<sup>175</sup> namely consider the Unlimited/Limit as existing in the One κατ' αἰτίαν, according to their respective, opposed ιδιότητες, while existing in themselves καθ' ὑπαρξιν, and subsequently in the divine orders κατὰ μέθεξιν. Yet in the end this suggestion would run into Proclus' critique of Iamblichus' framework, as we have seen: the One would still fall prey to the characteristic plurality implied in the opposed pair of characters.<sup>176</sup> One is then left with a lingering causal gap in Proclus' account between the One and the characters correlating with the Limit/Unlimited, and by proxy the henads.

#### 4.6 Conclusion: Assessing Proclus' Framework for the One

As we have seen, Proclus' framework achieves a balance between two positions: that the One truly transcends 'all things', to the degree that it is ineffable in itself; and that it is still a cause, thanks to Proclus' unparticipated/participated framework. Yet causality, as we have seen countless times, implies the principle of synonymy, where causes must be the same in kind as the effect that they produce. We saw in Chapter 2 that Proclus accounts for this across a general scale by distinguishing between the unparticipated cause and a series of participated intermediaries, whereby the unparticipated cause is buffeted, as it were, from the final effect. The application of this framework to the One at least secures the One from the plurality of its final effect, all things, but it is not without an impasse, as we just saw. On the one hand, Proclus secures the One's transcendence by making it causally prior to entities that are 'one-only' by subsistence (ὑπαρξίς)—for both the henads and the Limit/Unlimited. However what explains the opposed characters (ιδιότητες) for the Limit and Unlimited, and in turn the plurality of characters that correspond to each henad, remains unaccounted for, thanks to the One's transcendence. If the One pre-contains these characters in itself in Proclus' structure, the original problem of the One pre-containing plurality recurs, as we saw in earlier authors in Chapter 1, and another 'One' would need to be posited, and so on.

This is where Damascius' framework becomes significant, as we will see in our next chapter. Unlike Proclus, Damascius ends up affirming that the One

<sup>175</sup> Cf. *De Decem Dub.* 63,7–12 and *ET Prop.* 65.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. *In Parm.* 1107,29–1108,15, and earlier p. 173 ff.

implies the opposed characters of unity and plurality (standing in for Proclus' Limit and Unlimited).<sup>177</sup> This follows on Damascius reconsidering the notion of causal synonymy from Proclus: if the One is the cause of all things, even if its causality is delegated, then it must still anticipate the features of its final effect. What secures the One's transcendence is then not its unity alone—since unity eventually implies its opposite, plurality—but a prior principle that is transcendent without any causal property or character like unity. Thus the Ineffable becomes the first principle, rather than the One. For Damascius, then, the answer to this causal gap in Proclus' framework is to say that the principle of transcendence should be separated from the One's causality. Only then can one explain the derivation of participated causes from the One, and therein the derivation of plurality from unity.

<sup>177</sup> Damascius, *DP* 1, 56,8–11. Discussed further in p. 289–290.

## Damascius on the One's Causality and the Ineffable

Having looked at Proclus on the One in Chapter 4, and some of the difficulties that emerge from his approach,<sup>1</sup> we should now consider how Damascius understands the One and why it leads him to posit the Ineffable.<sup>2</sup> Damascius is perhaps most well-known for diverging from nearly all prior Neoplatonists in claiming that a higher principle, the Ineffable, is the first principle rather than the One. Most secondary literature addressing this issue has tended to focus almost solely on the Ineffable, particularly on the aporetic difficulty of the first few pages in Damascius' *De Principiis*.<sup>3</sup> The majority of these analyses have been conducted from an epistemological angle, with certain interpretations suggesting that Damascius posits the Ineffable as a limit to the soul's knowledge of principles in themselves and of higher reality. However not well-addressed in the literature has been Damascius' understanding of the One's causality, both in itself and in light of his reasons to posit the Ineffable.

In this chapter, I maintain rather that Damascius' transformation of the One's causality leads him to posit the Ineffable as a principle: the Ineffable fills the place that Proclus' unparticipated One had in grounding the direct causation of plurality. Key to Damascius' shift is his claim that the One is causally synonymous with its final effect, all things (τὰ πάντα)<sup>4</sup>—a claim that Proclus is careful to avoid—and it is because of his view of causal synonymy that the *De Principiis*' first *aporia* is raised: how is the first principle before all things, if 'cause' implies that it pre-contains all things, or is 'coordinated' with all things? Implicit in the question is that the principle should *not* pre-contain what comes after it, if it is truly before its effects. The issue is essentially similar to the one Proclus raises in responding to Plotinus (and by proxy Porphyry and

1 Namely the derivation of the henads from the One (for which we offered a tentative solution), and the derivation of the Limit and Unlimited from the One.

2 Throughout this chapter, all primary source citations refer to Damascius unless otherwise specified.

3 As for example Ahbel-Rappe (1998) 357–358, Dillon (1996), and Caluori (2018). Cf. p. 20 n.69.

4 Throughout this chapter I typically refer to τὰ πάντα as 'all things'. Damascius uses this phrase in a way that is functionally similar to πλῆθος/plurality in Proclus, where the principle underlying πλῆθος is the One, just as for Damascius the principle underlying τὰ πάντα (which includes unity/the One and plurality) is the Ineffable.

Iamblichus), but instead of claiming that the One is the first principle by being unparticipated, Damascius posits the Ineffable.

From our investigation in Chapter 3, Damascius' claims about the One's synonymy should come as no surprise. As we saw for cases of higher principles like Being producing lower, dissimilar effects like Intellect, Damascius holds that such causes must become like the thing they produce: thus Being acts on itself as it causes Intellect, and becomes similar to the entity it produces. This results in a two-stage distinction in the causal process: (1) 'before' causing Intellect, Being (as the Unified) is not intelligible or causally related to Intellect; and (2) 'after', or in, causing Intellect, Being becomes intelligible and causally related with Intellect.<sup>5</sup> As we will see, Damascius implicitly has this distinction in mind for the relation between the Ineffable and the One, both respectively analogous to (1) and (2), and this explains why Damascius emphasizes synonymy between the One and τὰ πάντα.

Over the next few sections we will consider how Damascius considers the One's causality in light of its relation to the first principle's role. In Section 5.1, we will analyze arguments for the One's causal synonymy with 'all things', which comes up in the beginning pages of the *De Principiis* after Damascius raises the *aporia* on the first principle. In the context of Damascius' arguments, we will see how he acknowledges Proclus' characterization of the One, as undetermined in itself, while still allowing for a qualified sense in which the One pre-contains, and is causally related to, all things.

In Section 5.2 we will see how Damascius' position on the One's causal synonymy transforms Proclus' structure of principles between the One and Being. While Proclus cleanly separates the One from the Limit and Unlimited as henads, following the unparticipated/participated distinction, Damascius integrates these first two principles, along with Being, into the realm of the One according to the following schema: the One-All, as the principle of unity; the All-One, as the principle of plurality; and the Unified, as the principle of the mixture of unity and plurality. Damascius ultimately ties the three principles directly to the One's nature. At the same time, Damascius affirms the One's internal nature as ineffable, unrelated, and detached from all things, in the same way as Proclus' One which implies no distinction between these three latter principles. To account for these two characterizations, Damascius makes a distinction between the 'undetermined One' and the 'determined One'; in the latter stage, the One-All, All-One, and Unified become manifested. Within the distinction between undetermined and determined, I will argue that

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5 Cf. 3.2.



Damascius has in mind the causal distinction between (1) and (2) for the 'undetermined' and 'determined' states. Given this, if the 'undetermined One' implies or anticipates the three principles after it, then we need a principle which is not just *relatively* undetermined, but absolutely such. Thus we find one main reason for Damascius to posit the Ineffable.

Finally in Section 5.3 we will look at Damascius' arguments for the Ineffable in light of our previous analyses of the One. An important consideration in this is Damascius' 'ascents' or attempts to prove the first principle (*DP* 1, 23–65), where we see why the One, even if considered as 'undetermined', cannot qualify as the first. In this context it becomes clear that Damascius' One is being considered in an essentially different way from Proclus' One. This becomes an important factor when we consider problems in Damascius' account for the Ineffable, including readings that would imply either a skeptical, nominalistic interpretation or a 'superfluous' interpretation of the Ineffable. As we will see, from having looked at the One, the Ineffable for Damascius functions as a ground and basis for the One's causality, rather than as a ground for skepticism concerning principles.<sup>6</sup>

In the conclusion I will briefly show how Damascius' framework solves the causal gap between the One and the henads found in Proclus, showing us one main advantage of his approach. Damascius is able to do so only at the expense of positing a higher, non-causal principle, while the One produces lower principles. In a qualified sense, Damascius re-frames the unparticipated One from Proclus as the Ineffable—as transcendent—but he recognizes that the absolute principle in this capacity has no causal relation to the lower levels. And in

6 Cf. Metry-Tresson (2012) 36: 'Toutefois, l'usage systématisé et technique de la notion de *περιτροπή* ne fait pas pour autant de Damaskios un «néoplatonicien sceptique». Certes, il utilise les stratégies aporétiques des sceptiques, l'efficacité de leurs méthodes, néanmoins sans partager leur vision philosophique'. See also Tanaseanu-Döbler (2016) 370 (cf. 372, n. 44): 'Aber Damaskios verbleibt nicht vollkommen in der Aporie; schon das gewählte Genre legt es nahe, auch λύσεις zu erwarten. Die Dynamik von Aporien und Lösungen wird zutreffend von Combès beschrieben: Damaskios ist kein Skeptiker; die Aporien führen über sich hinaus, und aus Brüchen in der Argumentation ergeben sich auf einer anderen Ebene neue Antworten. Die zetetische Form und die Aporie sind bei ihm weniger erkenntnistheoretische Kapitulation als vielmehr eine argumentative und zugleich, wie ich hervorheben würde, rhetorische Strategie. Sie heben zum einen die absolute Unzugänglichkeit und Besonderheit des ersten Prinzips hervor, welches nicht als ontologischer Ausgangspunkt eines Systems geordneter, herleitbarer Emanationen wie in Proklos' systematischen Entwürfen angesehen werden kann (das aber nichtsdestotrotz nach Damaskios als erstes Prinzip zwingend notwendig ist). Zum anderen geben sie dem Leser verschiedene Argumente für die damaskianische Position an die Hand, mittels derer eine Positionierung innerhalb des neuplatonischen Diskurses erfolgen kann'.

this sense, if the One is to be a cause, it must become synonymous with its final effect—and therefore no longer absolutely transcendent.

## 5.1 Causal Synonymy and the One

Damascius discusses the One's causality primarily within a series of dialectical questions,<sup>7</sup> oftentimes in an aporetic context in the *De Principiis*. Whereas in Proclus one finds a demonstrative treatment of the One in axiomatic-style treatises like the *Elements of Theology*, or commentaries like the *Parmenides Commentary*, Damascius settles his conclusions about the One through the different vantage points offered by each difficulty or question he answers<sup>8</sup>—whether on specific aspects of the One (e.g., whether it is knowable or not),<sup>9</sup> or the nature of the Ineffable,<sup>10</sup> from the level of the intelligible triad,<sup>11</sup> or in the context of general questions on procession and reversion,<sup>12</sup> and so on. As with Damascius' other words, the *De Principiis* has often been characterized as a work that demonstrates the limits of our human thinking when considering first principles,<sup>13</sup> which the aporetic method reveals. This need not imply that we cannot know the principles in some objective way, but it shows that, as beings at the lower end of the metaphysical hierarchy, our knowledge is accordingly conditioned by our rung of reality, reflecting differentiation and division, while the unity of higher principles in turn implies a proportional limiting of the kind of knowledge we have of them.<sup>14</sup> This background helps

7 Here I use 'dialectical' in the sense of arguments which involve premises that are accepted and where the conclusion is drawn from the choice of the premise used.

8 On Damascius' style, see Van Riel (2010) 671 (quoted below), and O'Meara (2004) 102–106.

9 E.g. *DP* I, 62–75, among other passages.

10 As we will see shortly. See e.g. *DP* I, 1,4–4, 5.

11 E.g. *DP* II, 1–39.

12 E.g. *DP* III, 104 ff.

13 See e.g. Metry-Tresson (2012), O'Meara (2004) 102–106.

14 Van Riel (2010) 671 puts this point well: 'In this sense, Damascius is doubtless the most original thinker of late-ancient Platonism, more original than Proclus, whose endeavour lay in the first place in systematizing the doctrines of the Platonic school. Damascius profited from this systematization, which allowed him to pinpoint the problems inherent in the system. The first and most important problem to tackle in this respect is that though the Platonic system articulates the structure of human thought, and up to a point, of reality itself, it cannot be a precise rendering of a reality that is beyond conceptualization'. Van Riel also continues: 'This aporetic nature of Damascius' method reveals yet another fundamental trait of his thought. Although, as we shall see, he disagrees with his predecessors on the nature of the first principles, on the nature of the soul, and on a vast number of related issues, this profound disagreement typically is hidden, so to speak,

to capture Damascius' approach to the two-sided aspect to causes, and further the distinction made between the One as the first cause and the Ineffable as a prior, non-causal principle.

Given this caveat, since Damascius begins the *De Principiis* by asking about the first principle's relation as either 'before' or 'with' all things (τὰ πάντα), it will be worth briefly recalling Plotinus' and Proclus' positions in the following.

In Chapter 1 we saw that Plotinus primarily emphasizes the One's transcendence over all beings and plurality, which implicitly makes up the category of 'all things'. Yet Plotinus also phrases the One's relation to all things in terms of its being the 'power' (δύναμις) of all things in *Ennead* v.3.15, so that it contains all things 'beforehand' (πρότερον), that is before distinction arises.<sup>15</sup> While Plotinus denies that the One contains all things in other passages, he appears to make all things continuous with the One in this case, where the distinction between the two sides is in 'all things' coming into actuality in differentiation compared to the One as their 'power'. This would also follow Plotinus' description in *Enn.* vi.1.7.32 of the Forms' causality in relation to particulars possessing that property. There, each particular instantiation of 'beauty' receives a specific determination and shape (μορφήν), which makes it distinct from the Form, 'Beauty', that is not specified as any one particular, distinct shape: to encompass all the varying instantiations of 'beauty' in particulars, the Form's causality must then be prior by not having any given defining shape.<sup>16</sup> Plotinus maintains the same general characterization for the One: as their cause, the One is synonymous with all things, yet 'all things' that come to be in act are brought about by their existence in differentiation, or in being 'shaped', whereas the One lacks such 'shape'.

We have seen why Proclus rejects this conception of the One, even if the One transcends all things.<sup>17</sup> In Proclus' critique of Iamblichus from *Parmenides Commentary* 1107–1108, we find that any suggestion of continuity between the One and all things still implies that the One pre-contains an internal, hidden

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behind a sophisticated discussion of the arguments of others. More often than not, in the discussion of a specific issue, Damascius first quotes, and then reaffirms, the standard view of the school, established principally by Proclus. Yet in the subsequent discussion he subtly turns this view upside down, pondering the problems at stake, until he comes up with a new version that is in fact irreconcilable with the view from which he started. The disagreement is not explicitly stated, but the outcome of the discussion reveals that the previous view has become untenable. This is most characteristic of Damascius' method, and it can be amply exemplified'.

15 Plotinus, *Enn.* v.3.15, 27–32. See earlier discussion in p. 34–35.

16 *Enn.* vi.1.7.32, 34–39. Cf. D'Ancona Costa (1996) 371–373.

17 See p. 69 ff. and p. 173 ff.

plurality. For Proclus, each cause must internally pre-contain, and therefore have the power to produce, that which comes after it. If the One directly produces plurality, it must in its own way be a kind of plurality as a cause (κατ' αἰτίαν). This results in Proclus' conclusion that 'we will preserve it as One in the proper sense and remove all things from it'.<sup>18</sup> In other words, 'all things' must not be attributed to the One, even in the way Plotinus proposes in *Enn.* v.3.15.

We can represent these two positions in the following ways:

- For Plotinus, A causes B [all things], therefore A is synonymous with B *only* in terms of the content between the two terms; A is however *not* synonymous with B, insofar as B's mode of existence is differentiated in relation to A's unity.
- For Proclus, A causes B, while B causes C, so A is a cause of C; synonymy, however, only obtains between immediate terms, thus A is only synonymous with B, and B is only synonymous with C. So the law of transitivity for causal synonymy does not apply between A and C—in other words, the One does not cause 'all things' by being 'all things' itself.

For Damascius, as we will see, Proclus' principle of causal transitivity necessitates that synonymy also obtain across terms: thus if A is synonymous with B, and B is synonymous with C, then A is synonymous with C. Thus if the One is the cause of 'all things', then the One must also be synonymous, and therefore 'all things' as a cause.

### 5.1.1 *The First Aporia in DP 1,1–2: the One as Coordinated with τὰ πάντα*

Damascius directly raises this issue of synonymy as a difficulty in *De Principiis* 1, 1–2, when asking whether the first principle (ἀρχή) of all things can be considered as a cause. In the first section of the *aporia*, Damascius indicates two aspects required for being such a principle: (1) its causality implies being together with the effects; and (2) as a principle it must be prior to, and transcend, its effects. In order to see why Damascius thinks (1) and (2) are opposed to each other, we should see the whole passage in context:

Is that which is called the one first principle of all things (τῶν πάντων)<sup>19</sup> (a) beyond all things or (b) something belonging to all things (τι τῶν πάντων)—as it were, the summit of those things which proceed from it? And do we say that all things are (b\*) together with (σύν) it, or (a\*) after it and from it?

18 *In Parm.* 1108,7–8: κυρίως ἐν αὐτὸ φυλάττοντες πάντα ἀφαιρήσομεν.

19 As will become apparent, Damascius uses the phrase as a technical term throughout the *De Principiis*, indicating both plurality as well as pure unities (like the henads).

(a\*) If someone were to say the latter, how would there be a thing outside of all things? (1) For 'all things' (πάντα) in the absolute sense are those from which nothing is lacking. But the principle is lacking, therefore all things are not absolutely after the principle, but with the principle. (2) 'All things' yet implies many things<sup>20</sup> having been limited (πεπερασμένα), since the unlimited would not be completely all things. Therefore it is manifest that nothing is outside of all things:<sup>21</sup> for totality (παντότης)<sup>22</sup> is a certain boundary and thus an encompassment, in which the principle is, on the one hand, the upward limit, while the extreme of what is from the principle is the downward limit. Therefore all things are with the limits. (3) And yet the principle is coordinated with the things which are from [it]: for it is and is called the principle of those things. Both the cause then [is coordinated] with its effects, and the first with those things after the first. But we call these 'all things' which are a single coordination of those which are many, such that the principle is in all things. (4) And generally we say 'all things' in an absolute way so much as we conceive them in whatever way—but we also conceive the principle. Accordingly, we are even accustomed to call a ruler (ἄρχοντα) and those ruled (ἄρχομένους) the entire city (πᾶσαν πόλιν), and both begetter (γενήτορα) and those begotten (γεννηθέντας) the entire family (πᾶν γένος).

(b\*) If 'all things' are with the first principle, the principle is not something among all things, since [otherwise]<sup>23</sup> even it has been

20 Westerink-Combès (DP I, 1, n. 1) note that this usage of the verb, βούλεσθαι, often signifies either a tendency, exegesis, or proper quality for the nature of the thing indicated within Aristotle (cf. Bonitz, *Index aristotelicus*, s.v., p. 140b41ss), and that the term's usage is common in Damascius, while rare in Proclus. Damascius thus uses it here in the sense that 'all things' means multiplicity (πολλά) as they are limited (πεπερασμένα).

21 Westerink-Combès (DP I, 1, n. 2) reference Aristotle's *Met.* K.10, 1067a20–23, where Aristotle demonstrates that the notion merely of 'all', in relation to places, excludes by definition infinity or unlimitedness.

22 Compare Damascius' word choice with ὁλότης, which can also mean 'totality'. See e.g. Proclus, *In Tim.* II 61,27 ff., where he explicitly contrasts παντότης and ὁλότης in relation to Plato's description of the Living Being as being 'as whole (ὅλον) as possible and complete (τέλειον), made up of complete parts' (ὅλον ὅτι μάλιστα ζῶον τέλειον ἐκ τελέων τῶν μερῶν εἶη) (*Tim.* 32d1–33a1). Proclus uses ὁλότης to indicate the intellectual realm (or Intellect), which is characterized in terms of parts and wholes, while παντότης indicates the intelligible realm (or Being), which is 'complete' (τέλειον) and defines the whole-part division in Intellect. Damascius likely bears this distinction in mind here, especially since he links παντότης with completion, as a 'certain boundary', 'encompassment', and so on. Special thanks to Inna Kupreeva for pointing this out.

23 Following Westerink-Combès' suggested insertion.

comprehended in all things.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the single coordinated structure (σύνταξις) of all things, which [itself] we call ‘all things’, is without a principle (ἀναρχός) and without cause (ἀναίτιος), so that we do not go up upon the unlimited. But it is necessary that everything is either a principle or from a principle;<sup>25</sup> therefore all things are either a principle or from a principle. However if the latter, the principle will not be with all things, but outside all things, because the principle is of those things from it; but if the former, what would proceed from all things, just as from the principle, and outside of all things toward the things downward as the full completion of all things? For even this is in all things, since the notion of ‘all things’ leaves aside absolutely nothing. Therefore, all things are neither a principle nor from a principle.

DP I, 1,4–2,20<sup>26</sup>

πότερον ἐπέκεινα τῶν πάντων (a) ἐστὶν ἡ μία τῶν πάντων ἀρχὴ λεγομένη, ἢ τὶ τῶν πάντων (b), οἷον κορυφὴ τῶν ἀπ’ αὐτῆς προϊόντων; καὶ τὰ πάντα σὺν αὐτῇ (b\*) λέγομεν εἶναι, ἢ μετ’ αὐτὴν καὶ ἀπ’ αὐτῆς; (a\*)

(a\*) εἰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦτο φαίη τις, πῶς ἂν εἴη τι τῶν πάντων ἐκτός; ὦν γὰρ μὴδ’ ὁτιοῦν ἄπεστι, ταῦτα πάντα ἀπλῶς ἄπεστι δὲ ἡ ἀρχή· οὐκ ἄρα πάντα ἀπλῶς τὰ μετὰ τὴν ἀρχήν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν ἀρχήν. ἔτι δὲ τὰ πάντα πολλὰ βούλεται εἶναι πεπερασμένα· τὰ γὰρ ἄπειρα οὐκ ἂν εἴη πάντα ἀπαρτί. οὐδὲν ἄρ’ ἔξω φανεῖται τῶν πάντων· ὅρος γάρ τις ἢ παντότης καὶ ἤδη περίληψις, ἐν ᾗ ἢ μὲν ἀρχὴ πέρας τὸ ἄνω τὸ δ’ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ἔσχατον πέρας τὸ κάτω· πάντα ἄρα μετὰ τῶν περάτων. ἔτι δὲ ἡ ἀρχὴ συντέτακται τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς· ἐκείνων γὰρ ἀρχὴ λέγεται τε καὶ ἔστι· καὶ τὸ αἵτιον δὴ τοῖς αἰτιατοῖς, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον τοῖς μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον. ὦν δὲ μία σύνταξις πολλῶν ὄντων, ταῦτα πάντα λέγομεν ὥστε ἐν τοῖς πᾶσι καὶ ἡ ἀρχή. καὶ ὅλως πάντα λέγομεν ἀπλῶς ὅσα καὶ ὅπως οὖν ἐννοοῦμεν, ἐννοοῦμεν δὲ καὶ τὴν ἀρχήν. καὶ τοίνυν εἰώθαμεν πᾶσαν λέγειν πόλιν ἄρχοντα καὶ ἀρχομένους, καὶ πᾶν γένος τόν τε γενήτορα καὶ τοὺς γεννηθέντας.

(b\*) εἰ δὲ πάντα μετὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς, οὐκ ἂν εἴη τι ἡ ἀρχὴ πάντων, συνειλημμένης ἐν τοῖς πᾶσι καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς· ἡ ἄρα μία τῶν πάντων σύνταξις, ἣν πάντα

24 I take συνειλημμένης in a logical sense, i.e. there is no way to isolate the principle from the group, ‘all things’.

25 Damascius directly cites Aristotle, *Phys.* III.4, 203b6; see also Caluori (2018) 272. In that context, Aristotle denies that there is a principle of the infinite, and thus he cites this premise. Note also Damascius appears to employ the same reasoning from the impossibility of the infinite, so in this respect may be borrowing from Aristotle.

26 For discussions of this passage, see also Caluori (2018) 269–273, Dillon (1996) 124–125 and Tanaseanu-Döbler (2016) 372–373.

φαμέν, ἀναρχός ἐστι καὶ ἀναίτιος, ἵνα μὴ ἐπ' ἀπειρον ἀνίωμεν. ἀλλὰ μὴν δεῖ γε πᾶν ἢ ἀρχὴν εἶναι ἢ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· καὶ τὰ πάντα ἄρα ἢ ἀρχὴ ἐστὶν ἢ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν τοῦτο, οὐκ ἂν εἴη σὺν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἡ ἀρχή, ἀλλ' ἔξω τῶν πάντων, ὡς ἡ ἀρχὴ τῶν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· εἰ δ' ἐκεῖνο, τί ἂν εἴη ἀπὸ τῶν πάντων προῖον ὡς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς καὶ ἔξω τῶν πάντων ἐπὶ τὰ κάτω ὡς τῶν πάντων ἀποτελεσμα; καὶ τοῦτο γὰρ ἐν τοῖς πᾶσιν· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀφίησιν ἡ τῶν πάντων ἀπλῶς ἔννοια· τὰ ἄρα πάντα οὕτε ἀρχὴ οὕτε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς.

In the first paragraph Damascius presents two, opposed choices for the nature of the first principle which together establish the aporetic impasse in the second and third paragraphs. One curious feature is the way Damascius begins the problem by asking what appears to be the same question twice, but with the relation switched in both cases: 'Does the first principle belong with all things (τι τῶν πάντων)<sup>27</sup> (*b*), or is it beyond all things (*a*)?'; and, 'Are all things with (*b*\*), or after (*a*\*), the first principle?' Damascius ends up addressing only the second question (*b*\*)–(*a*\*) in the second and third paragraphs, with the relation of 'all things' toward the first principle. One possible reason for this may be Damascius' employment of Aristotle's principle from *Physics* 1.1<sup>28</sup> of arguing from what is more known to the less known, so that the inquiry for the principle should begin from the side of the effects rather than the cause.

Another reason for Damascius to ask about the principle's relation from both sides of the principle (*a*)–(*b*) and effect (*a*\*)–(*b*\*) may be his use of Aristotle's definition of relatively opposed terms (τὰ πρὸς τι ἀντίκειται αὐτὰ) in the *Categories*.<sup>29</sup> For Aristotle, terms such as the 'double' have their name, and therefore existence, only by being in relation to their opposite—like the 'half' for the 'double'. Aristotle's other example of the knowable (ἐπιστητόν) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) is more relevant in this case, where both terms exist, as such, only by their mutual relation. However an important difference with the double–half case should be noted: one of the terms, the 'knowable', can still

27 Notice here that Damascius does not ask whether the principle is 'with' (σύν) all things—as in the other formulation, of 'all things' with/σύν the principle—but whether it is 'of' or 'belongs to' all things (τῶν πάντων)—reflecting a genitive of belonging.

28 Aristotle, *Phys.* 1.1, 184a17–21.

29 Aristotle, *Cat.* X, 11b24–31. See also Simplicius, *In Cat.* 382,17–19: 'Aristotle defined the opposition in respect of the relative before the others because, it seems to me, it has a particular distinguishing mark lacked by the others, namely that things opposed in this way co-subsist with one another (τὸ συνυπάρχειν ἀλλήλοις)' (trans. Gaskin). (πρῶτην δὲ Ἀριστοτέλης ὥρισατο τῶν ἄλλων τὴν κατὰ τὸ πρὸς τι ἀντίθεσιν, διότι οἶμαι ἴδιον ἔχει τι αὐτῇ παρὰ τὰς ἄλλας, τὸ συνυπάρχειν ἀλλήλοις τὰ οὕτως ἀντικείμενα.) Special thanks to Laura Castelli for this suggestion.



exist without knowledge itself existing. For instance, Lake Michigan can still exist before one has acquired knowledge of the lake, however not as a thing actually known: rather it is only when that person has come to know Lake Michigan that it comes to be an object of knowledge, which, as such, only then exists in relation to that person's knowledge of the lake. It is then the *relational* terms, when knowledge comes to be, that the subject and object of knowledge come to exist as relatively opposed terms.<sup>30</sup>

Damascius may then be considering the first principle in this light, that the principle is only specifically a cause insofar as it is relatively opposed to the effect that comes to be.<sup>31</sup> Already this is a contrast to Proclus' approach, where the first principle is taken as an axiomatic starting point or conclusion, as the progression from *ET* Prop. 1–5 shows for the One as the starting point for all entities. On Damascius' approach, the principle becomes defined not within an axiomatic framework, but only in relation to the effect which already exists. Although one might take this to imply an epistemic skepticism on Damascius' part, this approach instead reflects a basic issue in defining the principle that can only be done in relation to the effects.<sup>32</sup>

30 On this see Simplicius, *In Cat.* 383,22–30, where he quotes Ps.-Archytas from the latter's 'On Opposites': 'Of the relatives some reciprocate towards one another from both sides, as for example the larger and the smaller, the sibling and the similar. Others do indeed possess reciprocation, but not from both parts [of the relation]. For knowledge is said of the knowable and perception of the perceivable, but not, contrariwise, the knowable of knowledge and the perceivable of perception. The reason for this is that what is judged can exist without the judger, as for instance the perceivable [can exist] without perception and the knowable without knowledge, but it is impossible for the judger to exist without the judged, such as the perception without the perceivable and the knowledge without the knowable' (trans. Gaskin). (τῶν δὲ πρὸς τι τὰ μὲν ἀντιστρέφει ἀλλήλοις ἐξ ἐκατέρων, ὡς τὸ μέζον καὶ τὸ μείον καὶ τὸ ἀδελφὸν καὶ τὸ ὅμοιον· τὰ δὲ ἔχει μὲν ἀντιστροφάν, οὐ μὲν ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων γε τῶν μερῶν· ἃ μὲν γὰρ ἐπιστάμα λέγεται τῷ ἐπιστατῷ καὶ ἃ αἰσθασὶς τῷ αἰσθατῷ, οὐ μὲν ἀνάπαλιν τὸ ἐπιστατὸν τὰς ἐπιστάμας καὶ τὸ αἰσθατὸν τὰς αἰσθάσις. τὸ δὲ αἴτιον, ὅτι τὸ μὲν κρινόμενον ἄνευ τοῦ κρινόντος δυνατόν ἦμεν, οἷον τὸ αἰσθατὸν ἄνευ αἰσθάσις καὶ τὸ ἐπιστατὸν ἄνευ ἐπιστάμας, τὸ δὲ κρῖνον ἄνευ τῷ κρινομένῳ ἀδύνατον ἦμεν, οἷον τὰν αἰσθασιν ἄνευ τῷ αἰσθατῷ καὶ τὰν ἐπιστάμαν ἄνευ τῷ ἐπιστατῷ.)

31 Pace Ahbel-Rappe (1998) 356, where she claims that Damascius attacks Proclus in *ET* Prop. 11 (in turn claiming that all beings proceed from one first cause) as part of his venture to remove the 'barriers' of discursive thought. Yet *contra* Rappe, Damascius ends up using the same argument from Prop. 11 in multiple places: e.g. in his proof for the One's superiority to the Unified ('Being' for Proclus) in *DP* I, 54–55, and when Damascius claims that the One is the first, 'proper' cause (*DP* I, 5,11–12).

32 This is one misleading aspect of Ahbel-Rappe (1998) 357–360 and her interpretation of *DP* I, 1,4–2,20 against the background of Skeptical arguments from Sextus, since it suggests that Damascius' *aporia* is destructive. Yet as we will see, the *aporia* relies on premises Damascius fleshes out in the following section, *DP* I, 2,21–4,12, which Rappe does

The second paragraph (*a\**) presents reasons against saying that all things are 'after' the first principle, while the third paragraph (*b\**) presents reasons against saying that all things are 'with' the first principle. The conclusion in (*b\**) ultimately leads to the Ineffable (*DP* 1, 4,13 ff.),<sup>33</sup> where 'all things' are demonstrated to be neither from a principle, nor themselves a principle. This conclusion, however, follows only after Damascius denies that the first principle can be considered as uncoordinated and 'before' all things in (*a\**). In this sense, the conclusion of (*b\**) is not controversial coming from Proclus or other Neoplatonists, but (*a\**) certainly would be. One must ask: why suppose the first principle to be 'with' all things, or as something 'belonging' to all things? Damascius gives us four arguments for this, numbered above in paragraph (*a\**):

1. Nothing is lacking in the notion of 'all things'; implicitly, the principle is not lacking either; therefore it is not left out of 'all things' (1,9–11);
2. 'all things' means a multitude which is defined/limited, so that there is nothing not limited; therefore the principle is at the 'uppermost' extreme of the limits (1,12–16);
3. the principle is coordinated (συντέτακται) with what is from it (all things); the principle is then ordered in relation to, and therefore belongs with, that which it causes (1,16–2,4); and,
4. 'all things' indicates anything that we conceive (ἐννοοῦμεν); the principle is also conceived;<sup>34</sup> therefore the principle is included in 'all things'. (2,4–2,8)

Of the arguments, points (1)–(3) make claims about the ontological status or causal relation of 'all things' with the principle, while point (4) is an argument from how we 'conceive' things in general, which confirms the conclusion of the previous three arguments. In this sense the first three arguments are the most relevant for the causal issue. Points (1) and (2) complement each other insofar as

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not consider. Further she does not consider the category of relatively opposed terms and the object/subject of knowledge example from Aristotle's *Categories* (see previous two footnotes). I would argue that this latter case is a better way to analyze Damascius here, while agreeing with Tanaseanu-Döbler (2016) 370 that Damascius uses Skeptical methods of argumentation, but not the intentions or conclusions of the Skeptics.

33 Cf. below p. 281 n.163.

34 An ironic premise, given that a standard Neoplatonist would seem to deny that the first principle can be conceived. However cf. Proclus, *PT* 1.10, 45,20–22: Damascius may be borrowing from Proclus' notion here that demonstrations for the One depend on the most well-known premises, i.e. 'common notions' (κοινῶν ἐννοιών): e.g. the first conclusion of the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis that the 'one' is not many (which Proclus explicitly states is such one such 'common notion' in (e.g.) *In Parm.* 1092,13–26). Cf. Westerink-Saffrey's commentary in *PT* 1.10, 45, n. 1, and 110, n. 4.

both imply that the category, 'all things', is exhaustive: neither lack nor anything outside that limit can be indicated. On this, one might raise an objection over point (1), coming from Proclus' framework: if 'all things' below the One are characterized by unity and plurality, why does one *not* suppose that 'all things' imply lack? Certainly Proclus and earlier Neoplatonists would say this: one could suppose that 'all things' which includes plurality must imply some kind of lack.<sup>35</sup> Yet this objection could be met if 'all things' is taken to mean simply the collection of items altogether, and not just one or a subset with that group. In this sense, the collection of 'all things' together simply means nothing is excluded—leaving aside the question of ontological lack for members within that collection.

Point (2) follows on point (1), where anything that is not limited is explicitly ruled out—and in this respect, no lack is implied. A Proclean could again respond and say that 'all things', since they have the character of being limited, fall under the principle of the Limit—one of the pair of principles, Limit and Unlimited, below the One. Since the Limit is the direct cause of limitedness in all beings, the One is left exempt from the direct causation of beings—that is, the One, *qua* first principle, has no coordination with 'all things'. But this objection may ultimately be met by point (3), that the principle is coordinated with 'all things'.

Damascius argues point (3) by stating that the principle is named as such by relation to its subsequent effect. This follows from his statement that 'the cause then [is coordinated] with its effects, and the first with those things after the first'. Damascius argues that the cause is ordered in relation to the effects it generates, regardless of the kind of effects that they are. Again, a Proclean might object here that Damascius fails to distinguish between unparticipated and participated causes, which are supposed to account for this issue: participated causes belong to their respective participants by directly producing the effect in them; unparticipated causes, on the other hand, belong to none of their participants, since they produce their effect for all participants.<sup>36</sup> One might concede that unparticipated causes are 'coordinated' in the sense that they are the first cause of their respective order—as unparticipated Intellect for all intellects, unparticipated Soul for all souls, and so on.<sup>37</sup> However in relation to the participants, the unparticipated is not coordinated in this way.

35 At least such is the conclusion we find in Proclus' *ET* Prop's. 1–4, where plurality outside unity would seem to imply lack (4.4.1).

36 See Proclus, *ET* Prop. 23; see esp. 26,30–34; 28,5–7.

37 See Proclus, *ET* Prop. 21; see also *ET* Prop. 124, 110,7–8, where Proclus uses σύνταξις in a counter-factual case: '... for there is no coordination of entities that are entirely dissimilar'. (οὐ γὰρ ἔστι σύνταξις τῶν πάντῃ ἀνομοίων.) Cf. *ET* Prop. 29, which proves procession happens according to likeness (ὁμοιότητος).

Thus in the case of the One for Proclus, it is not coordinated—in fact to say so contradicts its nature as unparticipated. This would seem to be a fatal problem for Damascius' point (3), and by proxy Damascius' general argument in (*a*\*) for the principle as 'with' all things.

### 5.1.2 *The One's Causal Synonymy with τὰ πάντα*

The next section, *De Princ.* 1, 2–4, may shed some light on Damascius' presupposition above for argument (3). Why Damascius argues that principles are coordinated—even if they are unparticipated—can be seen in this next passage, when Damascius elucidates the different levels that compose the category, 'all things':

Further, all things are seen in some way (πῶς) together in plurality and a certain distinction, since we do not conceive the totality (τὸ πᾶν) without these characteristics. How, then, do particular distinction and plurality become straightaway manifested? We say<sup>38</sup> that all things do not exist in every respect in distinction and plurality, but the One [exists] as a summit of the many things, while the unified [exists] as a monad of those things which have been distinguished, and the One is yet more simple than the monad. But first the monad is the entire number, even if it is yet compressed together (συνεπτυγμένος);<sup>39</sup> in this way the monad is all things.<sup>40</sup> Second, the One is not something among the many things (τὰ πολλά): for if it even were, it would be something completing the many, as each of the others [also complete the many]. But as many as are the many things according to a certain division (κατὰ τινὰ μερισμόν), that One is also so many things before division, in the mode of the entirely partless. For the One is not like a minimum, as Speusippus seemed to say, but 'One' as absorbing all things. By its simplicity it has resolved all things, and it has made all things. Wherefore all things are from it, so that it is itself 'all things' before all things (πάντα αὐτὸ πρὸ τῶν πάντων).

*DP* 1, 2,21–3,12

38 Here I take ἦ as indicating confirmation or a response to the previous question. Damascius often poses the adverb when he gives his reply to an *aporia* or question throughout the *De Principiis*.

39 One can see the sense of συνεπτυγμένος commonly in Plotinus: e.g. *Enn.* VI.8.18, where the circle and radii are said to be a kind of expression of the center, and 'expansion' of the center outward: see esp. lines 17–27. Special thanks to Bethany Somma for pointing this out.

40 Compare with distinction Proclus' own distinction between 'monad' and unity/the One in *In Parm.* 1105,15–24.

ἔτι δὲ τὰ πάντα ὁμοῦ ἐν πλήθει πως ὁράται καὶ τινι διακρίσει· καὶ γὰρ τὸ πᾶν οὐκ ἄνευ τούτων ἐννοοῦμεν· πῶς οὖν εὐθὺς διάκρισις τις καὶ πλήθος ἐξεφάνη; ἢ οὐ πανταχῇ τὰ πάντα ἐν διακρίσει καὶ πλήθει, ἀλλὰ κορυφῇ μὲν τῶν πολλῶν τὸ ἓν, τῶν δὲ διακεκριμένων τὸ ἡνωμένον μονάς, καὶ τὸ ἓν ἔτι τῆς μονάδος ἀπλούστερον. ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μὲν καὶ ἡ μονάς ἅπας ὁ ἀριθμός, εἰ καὶ ἔτι συνεπτυγμένος· πάντα ἄρα οὕτως καὶ ἡ μονάς. ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τὸ ἓν οὐ τῶν πολλῶν τί ἐστίν· ἢ γὰρ ἂν καὶ συνεπλήρου τὰ πολλὰ, καθάπερ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστον· ἀλλ' ὅσαπέρ ἐστι τὰ πολλὰ κατὰ δὴ τινὰ μερισμόν, τοσαῦτα καὶ τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο πρὸ τοῦ μερισμοῦ κατὰ τὸ πάντῃ ἀμερές. οὐ γὰρ ἓν ὡς ἐλάχιστον, καθάπερ ὁ Σπεύσιππος ἔδοξε λέγειν, ἀλλ' ἓν ὡς πάντα καταπιόν· τῇ γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ ἀπλότῃτι πάντα συνανέλυσεν, καὶ ἐν τὰ πάντα ἐποίησεν. διὸ καὶ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι πάντα καὶ αὐτὸ πρὸ τῶν πάντων.

The basic three-fold schema in this passage between the One (1), the 'monad' (or 'unified') (2), and differentiated plurality (3) parallels Proclus' distinction between the One (1), the henads (2), and plurality (3) in the *Elements of Theology*, Prop's. 5–6. One difference is that Proclus posits multiple, distinct henads in the middle rung (2),<sup>41</sup> while Damascius only discusses one entity, the 'monad', which is an implicit plurality, as a compressed 'number', brought together in one entity. Another difference is what Damascius and Proclus consider as 'unified': in Proclus, it was the third category, plurality, that is unified; for Damascius above, it is rather the middle term that is called 'unified'. In this sense, Damascius' 'unified' entity, or the 'monad', is analogous to the henads (2) for Proclus, although insofar as Damascius calls the monad 'unified', this differs from Proclus' henads which are 'one' only.<sup>42</sup> By contrast, Damascius describes the monad as an 'entire number ... compressed together' (ἡ μονάς ἅπας ὁ ἀριθμός, εἰ καὶ ἔτι συνεπτυγμένος). We have already seen that this marks an implicit contrast from Proclus, where Damascius characterizes the henads as both 'one' and 'being' together,<sup>43</sup> which suggests that the 'monad', above, fits Damascius' description of the henads. And on this understanding, the monad not only brings unity into the group of all differentiated entities, but it also 'unfolds' the entities out of itself in the process—as both one and multiple. The difference from Proclus then appears to be that Damascius affirms the

41 Proclus, *ET* Prop. 6, esp. 6,28–30. Cf. earlier p. 166.

42 Although in other passages, the henads are implicitly 'plural' according to their causality. See for instance *ET* Prop. 118, which establishes that the henads pre-contain their attributes, which imply plurality, in the mode of the cause's being (κατ' αἰτίαν).

43 See earlier p. 148–149.

existence of multitude, or plurality, in the 'unified', in a way that is not directly implied in Proclus' henads.

Damascius' description of the One, however, implies more of a difference from Proclus which we should further consider. The One is described as the 'summit' of all things, and is thus 'itself "all things" before all things' (πάντα αὐτὸ πρὸ τῶν πάντων). Damascius distinguishes this sense of the One as 'all things' from the monad, which implies the character of plurality, although undifferentiated in its subsistence.<sup>44</sup> The One, by comparison, is 'all things' by being entirely partless (κατὰ τὸ πάντῃ ἀμερές). The One then has no relation to differentiation, unlike the monad: that is, the monad stands directly over differentiated entities, whereas the One is twice removed from the differentiated group, like the unparticipated in Proclus. On the other hand, Damascius' characterization of the One as 'all things' harkens back to Plotinus' *Enn.* v.3.15, where the One is called the δύναμις of all things and is said to pre-contain all things that come after it 'without distinction' (μὴ διακεκριμένα). So far Damascius' description of the One mirrors Plotinus' account, insofar as Damascius also describes the One as having all things in an 'entirely partless' way. Yet whereas Plotinus only says that the One is the 'power of all things', Damascius takes the further step of saying it is 'all things' itself.

On the other hand, one should see the contrast to Proclus' *ET Prop.* 5, where Proclus concludes with the One's priority inasmuch as it is 'one-only' (τὸ μόνον ἔν), both by participation and subsistence (ὑπαρξίς).<sup>45</sup> The One does not directly produce its effect nor have a direct relation with all things, but instead its existence is that in virtue of which it brings about the henads and derivatively produces plurality through the henads. One may then be puzzled by

44 Here and below it is important to note that Damascius implicitly distinguishes plurality (πλήθος) from differentiation (διάκριτον, or 'determination'/διορισμός): thus the 'monad' (2) or Unified has the character of plurality, but it is *not* differentiated; 'all things' themselves (3) have both the character of plurality *and* differentiation; in turn, the One (1) has neither plurality nor differentiation. See e.g. *DP* 111, 61,20–62,13.

45 Proclus, *ET Prop.* 5, 6,16–21: 'But if something before [the participated 'One' and the plurality] is that which brings together, either it is one or not-one. But if not-one, either many or nothing. Neither many, so that it is not plurality before the one [as this was proved earlier]; nor is it nothing, for how will nothing bring [the two] together? Therefore it is only one: for this One is not many, so that it does not go into an infinite [regress]. Therefore it is the One-itself (τὸ αὐτοέν), and every plurality is from the One-itself'. (ἀλλὰ μὴν εἴ ἔσται τι πρὸ αὐτῶν τὸ συνάγον, ἢ ἔν ἐστιν ἢ οὐχ ἔν. ἀλλ' εἴ οὐχ ἔν, ἢ πολλὰ ἢ οὐδέν. οὔτε δὲ πολλὰ, ἵνα μὴ πλήθος ἢ πρὸ ενός οὔτε οὐδέν· πῶς γὰρ συνάξει τὸ οὐδέν; ἔν ἄρα μόνον· οὐ γὰρ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔν πολλὰ, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἄπειρον. ἔστιν ἄρα τὸ αὐτοέν· καὶ πᾶν πλήθος ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοενός.) Cf. discussion in p. 162.

Damascius' claim that the One is not simply 'one' but rather 'all things', especially if 'all things' implies plurality.

Damascius directly addresses this tension when he addresses how the One can be 'all things' in its causality, and yet not be pluralized in being 'all things' in a literal way:

For if someone were to say that even if the One is all things in some way, yet in fact 'one' in the sense of being before all things in this way, it would be 'one' rather than 'all things' (for it is 'one' by itself, but 'all things' as cause of all and by its coordination towards all things, and to speak simply in a secondary way, the One is indeed primarily 'one'); but if someone were also to say this, duality (διπλόην) will first be placed in it.

DP 1, 3, 25–4, 6

εἰ γὰρ λέγοι τις ὅτι τὸ ἓν, εἰ καὶ πάντα ἐστὶν ὁπωσοῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἓν πρὸ τῶν οὕτω γε πάντων, καὶ μᾶλλον ἓν ἢ πάντα ἐστὶν (ἓν μὲν γὰρ καθ' ἑαυτό, πάντα δὲ ὡς αἷτιον πάντων καὶ κατὰ τὴν πρὸς πάντα σύνταξιν, καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν δευτέρως, ἓν δὲ πρῶτως τό γε ἓν), ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ τοῦτο λέγοι τις, πρῶτον μὲν διπλόην ἐν αὐτῷ θήσεται·

In the first few lines, Damascius concedes that the One is primarily 'one' in itself, when considered as prior to 'all things' from it—so far essentially following Proclus' position. However Damascius next shows that there are two ways to consider the One, marked out by the μὲν ... δὲ construction in line 4,3: if considered in itself, *without* considering what it causes, then the One is simply 'one' (ἓν μὲν γὰρ καθ' ἑαυτό); if considered both as a cause and in its 'coordination' (σύνταξις), however, then it is 'all things' (πάντα δὲ ὡς αἷτιον πάντων). While the One is primarily 'one' in itself, considered as a cause it must be 'all things' in relation to the effect it produces. This fits the pattern we saw back in Chapter 3 with other, lower causes, like Being's relation to Intellect, where Damascius posits two distinctions for such causes: in themselves they have no relation to their effect, but in their causal capacity, the relation to their effect is established. In these cases Damascius defines causes as relative to their effects in the sense that the cause must mirror the effect produced. In the way Damascius words the relation, with the One as 'all things' which produces 'all things', this is similar to Aristotle's notion of causal synonymy with his common example that 'man causes man'. Damascius carries this kind of analysis over to the One's causal relation with all things.

As we have noted, the principle of synonymy for Proclus holds only between directly produced entities, following from his proof in *ET* Prop. 28 that all things



produce by likeness (ὁμοιότης). In other words, while A causes B, and B causes C, A is a 'cause' of C by transitivity—but A is not *synonymous* with C. The picture we have seen, both in Chapter 3 and in our passage above, changes this: if something is described as a 'cause' in any sense, as A of C, then synonymy obtains transitively. Thus, if A is causally synonymous with B, and B is synonymous with C, then A is synonymous with C.<sup>46</sup> By this formula, the One is not just synonymous with the unity that comes after it, like Proclus' One, but also the character of plurality that emerges after the One in the Unified. Ultimately we are left with the notion that unity and 'all things' are co-relative terms, unlike what we see in Proclus' presentation of unity: plurality cannot exist without unity, but unity can exist without plurality. For Damascius, unity may take priority over plurality, but considered as a cause it cannot exist without its relation to 'all things', implicitly including plurality. Once again, Aristotle's example of the subject and object of knowledge as relatively opposed terms is apt here: one term has priority in relation to the other, insofar as the One (analogous to the object of knowledge) pre-exists the relation and is the cause of 'all things' (analogous to knowledge); however the One, considered as a cause (like the object of knowledge), only exists within its relation to its effect, all things.

The consequence of describing the One as related to 'all things' leads to Damascius' conclusion, from line 4,6 above, that duality (διπλόην) results in the One. Yet the way that Damascius concludes the passage with duality is also contingent: *if* the One is spoken of as 'one', then that duality immediately results by the relation of unity with 'all things'. By speaking this way we are already introduced to the concept of the Ineffable: if one expresses the One as 'one', then the relation to duality immediately results; if one does *not* express the One, then there is no duality—i.e. ineffability results. Damascius makes this idea explicit after our passage above, when he asserts that the principle (ἀρχή) must transcend both the One and 'all things'.<sup>47</sup> The move results, however, only

46 Although cf. Proclus, *ET* Prop. 56, where higher principles have greater causal power over lower effects than secondary causes of those effects. (Cf. p. 95–96.) On Proclus' framework, the One, for instance, is more causative of particular intellects than monadic Intellect, according to Prop. 56, but only because of the property of unity found in both monadic Intellect and the particular intellects, which goes back to the One. Unity is more causative as a property than intellection, because the former has a wider range of effects than the latter (*ET* Prop. 60). Consequently transitivity is limited only by the same property applying between A and C—that is, A is causally synonymous with C *only* by possessing an A-property. But A is not synonymous with C *qua* C. (Special thanks to Jan Opsomer for pointing out this proposition.)

47 *DP* 1, 4,6–12: 'But the ones dividing are ourselves, and it is ourselves who are doubled concerning its simplicity, and who are yet multiplied; for by being one, it is all things in the most simple mode. Yet if someone were also to say this, it is necessary that the

when a causal relation is affirmed. This confirms that Damascius contrasts the notion of the ἀρχή from that of the cause (αἷτιον), where the former implies an un-coordinated, detached entity in contrast to the notion of a cause. Thus if to be a principle implies these former traits, then it cannot be placed as relatively opposed to an effect in the way that a cause can.<sup>48</sup>

Thus if we return to point (3) from the *aporia* of our previous section (5.1.1), we may now see why Damascius considers the One as coordinated with ‘all things’, insofar as causes are necessarily related to their effects. The kind of coordination he implies, however, is not found in Proclus’ causal framework for the One, but instead follows both from the causal framework we have seen him employ, and specifically the changes he makes in the One’s causality.

### 5.1.3 *Damascius’ Response to Proclus against the One as τὰ πάντα*

Yet one may still be unsatisfied at this point. We might accept that there is a certain inadequacy in the One, at least in our thinking the One as the first cause,<sup>49</sup> if duality is a necessary implication in the very notion of the One. But then if this is so, Damascius seems to imply that the One pre-contains plurality. As we have seen throughout the previous chapters, this is inherently problematic if the One’s unity alone is that by which all lower levels of being come about. So how does he address this implicit problem? We may recall Proclus’ *Parmenides Commentary* 1106–1108,<sup>50</sup> where his main critique against his

first principle of all things is that which has transcended all things themselves, and the simplest totality, and the simplicity which absorbs all things, which is something belonging to the One’. (ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ μερίζοντες καὶ περὶ τὴν ἐκείνου ἀπλότητα διπλασιαζόμενοι καὶ ἔτι πολλαπλασιαζόμενοι, ἐκεῖνο γὰρ τῷ ἔν εἶναι πάντα ἐστὶ τὸν ἀπλούστατον τρόπον· εἰ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο λέγοι τις, ὅμως ἐξηρημένῃ δεῖ εἶναι τὴν τῶν πάντων ἀρχὴν αὐτῶν τῶν πάντων καὶ τῆς ἀπλουστάτης παντοτήτος καὶ τῆς πάντα καταπιούσης ἀπλότητος, οἷα ἡ τοῦ ἐνός.)

48 This stands in contrast to Aristotle, *Met.* Δ.1, 1013a16–23, which equates being a principle (ἀρχή) with being a cause (αἷτιον) in the same way that being is correlated with unity. Although as Natali (2013) 62–63 concludes, Aristotle ‘wants to ascribe to every αἷτία the feature of being an ἀρχή, but he does not want to identify the notion of αἷτία with the notion of ἀρχή’. Natali cites Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Met.* 247,8–15 in support of his interpretation, of which see esp. lines 13–15: ‘Principle is spoken of insofar as it is primary relative to that whose principle it is, and insofar as the things whose principle it is proceed from it, while cause is spoken of insofar as that whose cause it is is on account of it; that from which (τὸ ἐξ οὗ) is different from that on account of which (τὸ δι’ ὃ)’ (trans. Madigan). (ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καθὸ πρῶτόν ἐστι τοῦ οὗ ἐστὶν ἀρχή, καὶ καθὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὰ ὦν ἐστὶν ἀρχή, τὸ δὲ αἷτιον καθὸ ἐστὶ δι’ αὐτὸ τὸ οὗ αἷτιον· ἄλλο δὲ τὸ ἐξ οὗ ἐστὶ καὶ ἄλλο τὸ δι’ ὃ.) Coming from Alexander’s interpretation, Damascius seems to be exploiting the notional difference implied between the terms, ‘principle’ and ‘cause’, from Alexander and, by proxy, Aristotle.

49 Or the ‘proper cause’ (τὸ κυρίως αἷτιον), as he affirms in *DP* I, 5,10–13.

50 Discussed earlier in 4.2.1.

predecessors was that they end up making the One a plurality if they place 'hidden' plural attributes in the One, even if the One is pre-eminently unified. One may see certain parallels in the language between Damascius and the Plotinian position Proclus raises in the *Commentary*: Damascius describes the One as 'all things before all things' (πάντα αὐτὸ πρὸ τῶν πάντων), which is similar to the One in Proclus' representation being the 'whole-itself before wholes' (αὐτοόλον πρὸ ὅλων), and as containing 'paradigms of paradigms' (παραδείγματα παραδειγμάτων).<sup>51</sup> Further, Proclus says that 'all things' (πάντα) should be completely removed from the One, which is the opposite of what Damascius does with the One, as we have just seen.<sup>52</sup>

In *De Princ.* I, 89–94, Damascius addresses this general difficulty from Proclus by asking how the One can be all things if the term entails plurality and differentiation.<sup>53</sup> To answer this, Damascius first considers the objection that the One should just be 'one-only' (μόνον ἔν), as Proclus would have it:

How is the One all things (τὰ πάντα)? For perhaps it is not possible for the One even to be all things. And further what use is there for it to be all things? For it suffices for it to be solely 'one' with respect to the cause of all things. But if it is in fact the cause of all things, it can not be [itself] all things. And if 'all things' are also many (πολλά), the One surely cannot be many.

*DP* I, 92,16–21

πόθεν ὅτι πάντα; μήποτε γὰρ οὐδὲ οἷόν τε τὸ ἐν πάντα εἶναι· τίς δὲ καὶ ἡ χρεία τοῦ πάντα εἶναι; ἀρκεῖ γὰρ καὶ τὸ μόνον ἐν πρὸς τὸ πάντων αἴτιον· εἰ δὲ καὶ πάντων αἴτιον, οὐκ ἂν εἴη πάντα· εἰ δὲ καὶ πολλὰ τὰ πάντα, τό γε ἐν οὐκ ἂν εἴη πολλά.

Here Damascius recognizes Proclus' difficulty: if the One is identified with 'all things', and if 'all things' is equated with plurality on the level of the effects, then the One would be identified with plurality—which it cannot be. Thus the One cannot be 'all things' in this sense. Instead it should be prior to its effects,

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Proclus, *In Parm.* 1107,8–22.

<sup>52</sup> See also Proclus, *In Parm.* 1220,7–10.

<sup>53</sup> *DP* I, 89,4–8. The three questions are: (1) in what sense is it true that the One 'all things'? (ζητήσωμεν πρῶτον ὅπως ἀληθές ὅτι πάντα); (2) is the One 'all things' in an equal way? (εἰ ἐπ' ἴσης πάντα); and (3) since both are all things in an undifferentiated way (ἀδιακρίτως), what is the difference between the One and the Unified? (τίς ἡ διαφορὰ τοῦ εἶναι πάντα τῷ τε ἐνὶ καὶ τῷ ἡνωμένῳ· πάντα γὰρ ἐκάτερον ἀδιακρίτως.) Damascius proceeds to answer in backwards order—from (3) to (1) in *DP* 92–94. We begin with (1).

and should remain ‘one-only’. So far Damascius follows the same thought process as Proclus by denying any synonymy between the cause and effect, construed as plurality, so that one should affirm that the One causes by being ‘one-only’—or so it would appear.

In the next passage Damascius goes further by considering in what sense ‘all things’ are denied of the One. As we will see, this becomes the first step towards addressing Proclus’ difficulty:

But if the principle (ἀρχή) is not the anticipation (πρόληψις)<sup>54</sup> of those things which are from it (for the producer (τὸ παράγον) itself is not [identical to] the causes which are in it, but it is rather productive of the causes which are in it), the principle would then be more than the totality (τὸ πᾶν). If we say these things with veracity, the One would not be ‘all things’ in truth, but [it would be] all things after the One. For indeed we do not put the causes of all things in the One, such that it would thereby be all things, according to the entirety of causes. In no way is the One thus (all things) to speak in a real way (ὄντως), yet we do not conceive it as the smallest thing,<sup>55</sup> but as the most all-encompassing of all things and the greatest. Neither [do we conceive] it as the universe (κόσμον), but as the simplest of all things; nor [do we conceive] it as something among other things within the universe (κατὰ τὸν κόσμον), like the highest border of the fixed stars, but as all things dissolved (ἀναχυθέντων) into the simplicity of the One and no longer having the meaning,<sup>56</sup> ‘all things’.

DP 1, 93,8–21

54 Here I understand Damascius’ use of πρόληψις as analogous to Proclus’ κατ’ αἰτίαν category: the One is not plurality κατ’ αἰτίαν—in the same way it is not plurality κατὰ πρόληψιν—since if it were otherwise, the One would itself be a kind of plurality, which Proclus denies, and what I take Damascius is also denying here. Compare, however, the opposite affirmation of the One as ‘all things’ κατὰ τὴν πρόληψιν in DP 1, 38,4. In this context the denial of πρόληψις seems to be tied to the later qualification of ‘speaking in a real way’ (ὡς ὄντως εἰπεῖν). Compare also to Proclus, *De Providentia* 63,9–10, where the gods have knowledge of future indeterminate events by anticipation (ἢ πρόληψις) in a superior way. Assuming Damascius has this sense of πρόληψις in mind, he is then combining both an epistemological and ontological sense (since in the *De Providentia* passage, the gods’ knowledge is causal). The term, πρόληψις also comes out of a Stoic context, where it indicates a ‘rough’ preconception of something before one comes to define that thing in a specified sense. On this background see Griffin (2015) 59–60.

55 Implicit reference to Speusippus, earlier in DP 1, 3,9–10.

56 A literal translation of οὐκέτι πάντων εἶναι βουλομένων would be, ‘no longer wishing to be all things’. Damascius may here seem to reference the Aristotelian usage of βούλεσθαι, as indicating the definition or meaning of a term. Cf. earlier p. 225 n.20. The implication is

εἰ δὲ μὴ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐστὶν ἡ πρόληψις τῶν ἀπ' αὐτῆς (οὐδὲ γὰρ τὰ ἐν τῷ παράγοντι αἵτινα αὐτό ἐστι τὸ παράγον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ αἰτίων παρακτικόν), εἴη ἂν ἡ ἀρχὴ πλέον ἢ τὸ πᾶν. εἰ δὲ ἀληθὴ ταῦτα φαμεν, οὐκ ἂν εἴη κατὰ ἀλήθειαν τὸ ἐν τὰ πάντα, ἀλλὰ τὰ πάντα μετὰ τὸ ἐν· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ αἰτίας τῶν πάντων ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποτίθεμεν, ἵνα ταύτῃ γοῦν εἴη πάντα, κατὰ τὴν παντότητα τῶν αἰτίων. οὐδαμῶς ἄρα <πάντα><sup>57</sup> τὸ ἐν, ὡς ὄντως εἶπεῖν, ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ τὸ ἐλάχιστον ἐννοῶμεν, τὸ δὲ πάντων περιεκτικώτατον καὶ μέγιστον, οὐδὲ τοῦτο ὡς τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλὰ τὸ πάντων ἀπλούστατον, οὐδὲ τοῦτο ὡς κατὰ τι τῶν κατὰ τὸν κόσμον, οἷον τὴν ἐσχάτην ἵτυν τῆς ἀπλανοῦς, ἀλλ' ὡς εἰς τὴν ἀπλότητα αὐτοῦ πάντων ἀναχθέντων καὶ οὐκέτι πάντων εἶναι βουλομένων.

In the first half of the passage, Damascius continues to show in what sense 'all things' should be denied in the One: namely in terms of ascribing causes within the One. One can detect in the background Proclus' critique from the *Parmenides Commentary*, where Proclus concludes that 'the One will be as many things in plurality as Intellect' if it pre-contains, even if 'hiddenly', the primary causes of Being.<sup>58</sup> Damascius also raises this difficulty in the first three lines (93,8–10) when he denies the identity of the One with the causes in it: rather, as also for Proclus, the One is *productive* of the causes implicitly in it.<sup>59</sup> Damascius does not stop here, as Proclus would, but he goes on to refine how 'all things' may still be located in the One: since the One produces the causes of all things, they must still be in the One in the sense that the One 'dissolves' (ἀναχθέντων) and 'encompasses' (περιεκτικώτατον) all things in its simplicity<sup>60</sup>—leading to the enigmatic statement that all things no longer mean, or 'wish' to be, 'all things' (οὐκέτι πάντων εἶναι βουλομένων) in the One. The language hearkens back to Plotinus' language with the One as having all

that the term, 'all things', no longer has its meaning in the One, as 'no longer wishing to be "all things"' (i.e. in the One).

57 Tentatively agreeing with Westerink-Combès' addition, however the sentence's object may also refer to the latter 'entirety of causes' (τὴν παντότητα τῶν αἰτίων), so that the One is 'in no way the entirety of causes'—or with this sense, 'all things *qua* entirety of causes'.

58 Proclus, *In Parm.* 1107,29–1108,15. Cf. p. 175.

59 Cf. Proclus, *In Parm.* 1075,13–1076,1.

60 Another important point is how Damascius says we should conceive (ἐννοῶμεν) the One. Where Proclus says that other commentators raise the issue of how one can conceive the One, Damascius may be returning to this and affirming the concern that, where conceptualization is unavoidable, there is a need to have a fitting notion, even if ultimately the notion fails to capture the One's nature. Thus the notion of the One containing 'all things', however in its simplicity, without differentiation, and so on.

things without distinction,<sup>61</sup> which implies that the One's removal from 'all things' is only in terms of the mode of its existence, while it is simultaneously continuous with its effects. Damascius then seems to agree with Plotinus' phrasing, while he denies that this means the 'hidden plurality' of Proclus' worry from the *Parmenides Commentary* 1106–1108.

Exactly how the One remains 'all things' without possessing the characteristic plurality of the 'causes' of all things is something we find Damascius spell out in our next passage:

Since these things are in truth well said, we respond that it is right to proclaim [the One] as all things. For the Unified is an aggregate (συναίρεμα) of each plurality; (if the Unified then) is a totality (πᾶν) which is undifferentiated, just like plurality which has been differentiated, the One is everywhere that before the Unified: as many things as the One is, so much is the Unified. For the One is as many things since it proceeds towards such things; the One does not go down towards a 'one', but towards the Unified, and the Unified does not go down toward a 'unified', but toward totality having been distinguished (διακεκριμένον), such this way that we also clearly conceive 'all things' (τὰ πάντα). But just as in the center the circle has been concentrated together (συνέπτυκται), and all [radii] from the center, such even is the entire plurality of differentiation (διακρίσεως) in the Unified; and the same analogy holds for both the center itself in the One and the things that have been concentrated (συνεπτυγμένα) in the center, and in the same way all things are simplified.<sup>62</sup> In this way we say that all things are one (ἓν), and that the One is all things—and yet more, that it is all things according to unity (κατὰ τὸ ἓν). And all things are not entirely 'one', but that One is entirely 'all things'.

DP 1, 93,21–94,12

ἢ καὶ τούτων εὖ λεγομένων, ὀρθῶς ἔχει καὶ ἐκεῖνο πάντα ἀνυμνεῖν· ἐκάστου γὰρ πλήθους τὸ ἡνωμένον συναίρεμα. \*\*\* πᾶν ἐστὶν ἀδιάκριτον, οἷον τὸ πλεθος διακεκριμένον, πρὸ δὲ τοῦ ἡνωμένου ἐκασταχοῦ τὸ ἐν ἑκάστων, τοσαῦτα τὸ ἓν, ὅσα τὸ ἡνωμένον. ἔστι γὰρ τοσαῦτα, ὅτι προήλθεν εἰς τοσαῦτα· οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἓν ὑπέβη τὸ ἓν, ἀλλ' εἰς ἡνωμένον, οὐδὲ τὸ ἡνωμένον εἰς ἡνωμένον, ἀλλ' εἰς πᾶν διακεκριμένον, ὅπου καὶ σαφῶς τὰ πάντα νοοῦμεν. ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ κέντρῳ συνέπτυκται ὁ κύκλος καὶ πάσαι αἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ κέντρου, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῷ ἡνωμένῳ τὸ πᾶν

61 Cf. earlier p. 233.

62 Damascius' wording for the circle analogy is Plotinian in character: see e.g. *Enn.* VI.8.18, 1–22.

τῆς διακρίσεως πλῆθος· ἀνά δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ τό τε κέντρον αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ κέντρῳ συνεπτυγμένα καὶ πάντα ὁμοίως ἀπλοῖζεται. καὶ οὕτως ἐν τὰ πάντα λέγομεν, καὶ τὸ ἐν πάντα καὶ ἔτι πλεον, ὅτι κατὰ τὸ ἐν τὰ πάντα· καὶ τὰ μὲν πάντα οὐ πάντως ἐν, τὸ δὲ ἐν ἐκεῖνο πάντως τὰ πάντα.

Damascius' argument for asserting the One as 'all things' depends on a re-affirmation of causal synonymy: i.e. the One as the cause of 'all things' must itself be 'all things' in a higher, superior way.<sup>63</sup> One can see this in the construction of the last lines, 94,11–12, 'all things are not entirely "one", but that One is entirely "all things"', reflecting the cause's superiority toward its effects while it is synonymous in character with them.<sup>64</sup> A second factor, which we discussed earlier, is that Damascius re-contextualizes Proclus' principle of causal transitivity: not only is A the cause of C, because it causes B which causes C, but A is also causally synonymous with C, via its intermediary, B. In this case, the One (A) is synonymous with 'all things' in themselves (C), since it causes the Unified (B) which in turn causes 'all things' (C). Damascius argues for this from the analogy of terms between the One, the Unified, and 'all things' in their full manifestation. We can see this argument summarized in three steps (lines 93,21–94,4):

1. Wherever the Unified (as we saw from *De Princ.* 1, 2) lies behind any given group of differentiated things, so also the One lies behind each 'unified' entity;
2. the One's causality does not involve the same kind of entity produced, but something similar—the Unified—and similarly the Unified's causality of 'all things' is not the same as itself, but similar; thus,
3. the One's effects (the Unified, and 'all things' in distinction) match its own internal character, so that it is 'all things' in their fullest realization.

Point (1) implicitly brings back the structure of the One, Unified, and distinguished plurality from *De Princ.* 1, 2. The One here is the cause of unity for the Unified, which is an 'aggregate' (συναίρεμα) of all things. This suggests that the Unified contains the distinctions which make up 'all things' in their

63 Here I would say this characterization is similar to Aristotle's claim that fire, e.g., contains heat in a superior (and essential) way compared to the instantiation of heat as an accidental property in other non-fire substances. See Aristotle, *Met.* α.1, 993b26–31. Cf. earlier p. 82–88.

64 Cf. Proclus, *ET Prop.* 7 (see earlier p. 79–82). The reciprocation between 'all things' and 'one'/'that One' again recalls *DP* I, 1,4–7 with the question repeated inversely. In this case it may reflect some form of essential predication involving co-extensive terms (as mentioned earlier).



differentiated state, in turn suggesting that the Unified is the first emergence of plurality without the characteristic differentiation and division that characterizes 'all things' in itself.<sup>65</sup>

Point (2) recalls Prop. 28 from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, which established that causes produce entities by likeness (ὁμοιότητα).<sup>66</sup> For Proclus, this meant that the One produces entities that match its character—thus the henads as pure 'ones'—before unlike, non-one entities emerge. By contrast, Damascius maintains a modified version of this: the One produces something similar to itself, i.e. the Unified, but the latter effect displays the characters of both unity and plurality together—while yet undifferentiated (ἀδιακρίτως) like the One, and unlike 'all things' in their full manifestation. This would fit what we have seen in Damascius' overall causal framework, where the relation between higher causes and lower effects is described in terms of 'concentration' and 'unfolding': in the same way the One 'unfolds' from its concentrated state the combined characters of unity and plurality in the Unified, and in turn the Unified unfolds 'all things' in their differentiated state. This would also fit Damascius' description that the henads are not 'one-only' (in contrast to Proclus), but instead 'one' and 'being' unified together, while these two properties become differentiated and separated from each other at the lower levels of being.<sup>67</sup>

This leads to Damascius' circle-point analogy, which also helps to illustrate his argument at point (3). In the example, Damascius speaks of the circle as 'concentrated' (συνεπτυγμένα) in the center, alongside the radii which are also implicitly 'concentrated' in the center. Damascius uses the example to speak of the analogy that holds between the One and 'all things' through the One's relation to the Unified, and the Unified's relation to 'all things' in their differentiated state. Here, once again, we see Damascius' appeal to the principle of transitivity for causal synonymy: the nature of 'all things' in their highest sense is encompassed in the One, since the One contains them as their cause—without, however, the characteristic plurality or differentiation that marks the lower levels.

Thus we can now see Damascius' response to the difficulty Proclus raises over ascribing 'all things' to the One: true, the One does not pre-contain 'all things' in terms of the distinct causes which produce all things in their

65 In Damascius' framework, all instances of differentiation necessarily imply plurality, but not every instance of plurality implies differentiation: cf. earlier n. 44.

66 For further discussion of *ET* Prop. 28 in Proclus' causal context, see earlier p. 94–96.

67 Cf. p. 148–149.

pluralized state—however, the One still possesses, or is, ‘all things’ in their ‘concentrated’ state, i.e. without the characteristic division or plurality of the causes. In this sense Damascius revives Iamblichus’ formulation for the One (which ultimately goes back to Plotinus), except he refines Iamblichus’ language to address Proclus’ critique—and in this sense justifies Iamblichus’ initial intuition.

## 5.2 Causal Synonymy, and the One-All, All-One, and the Unified

As one can see so far, Damascius’ transformation of the One’s causality implies a marked shift from Proclus. The consequences of Damascius’ conclusion that the One implies ‘all things’ leads to a number of structural changes in intermediate principles between the One and Intellect—where ‘all things’ become manifested in differentiation. In Proclus we saw that the henads, in coordination with the Limit and Unlimited, make up this layer of intermediate principles. And yet as we saw from the conclusion in Chapter 4, Proclus is left with a tension in explaining how the One can produce the plurality of characters (ιδιότητες) that correspond to the Limit and Unlimited and all subsequent henads, if it is completely removed from plurality.

Damascius’ conclusion about the One’s synonymy with ‘all things’ implicitly closes this gap. For Damascius, while the One is only ‘one’ in itself, as a cause it becomes distinguished into three principles: the One-All (as the cause of unity), the All-One (as the cause of plurality) and the Unified (as the cause of unity and plurality together).<sup>68</sup> One may then recognize the two-sided causal model that we saw applied between Being and Intellect, earlier in Chapter 3, applied to the One and Being (or the Unified, as above):<sup>69</sup> the One can be understood in itself as unrelated, ineffable,<sup>70</sup> and undetermined (ἀδιώριστον),<sup>71</sup> while when considered as a cause of the Unified (and ‘all things’, by proxy), it becomes determined (διωρισμένον) into the One-All and the All-One. Damascius thus makes Proclus’ Limit and Unlimited aspects of the One in its causality, while

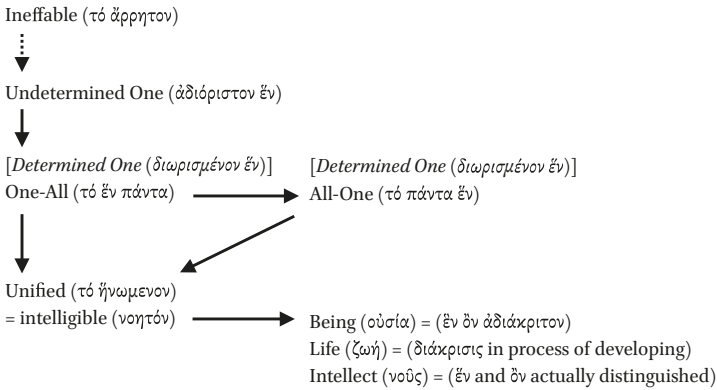
68 Cf. Van Riel (2010) 680: ‘Thus, Damascius introduces a distinction (albeit a symbolic one) at the level of the One, in a way parallel to the introduction of three stages of the intellect (the intelligible / the intelligible and intellective / the intellective) by Syrianus and Proclus, after Iamblichus’ introduction of the intelligible and the intellective as two different layers of the intellect’.

69 Damascius identifies the Unified as Being, e.g. in *DP* 11, 24,1 ff.

70 *DP* 1, 9,1–11,16.

71 *DP* 1, 94,13–98,27. Discussed in depth below.

the Unified becomes the first ‘henad’ out of which the other henads progressively become derived.<sup>72</sup> Here it will help to illustrate Damascius’ revamped view of principles in the following diagram:<sup>73</sup>



In this section, we should see how Damascius describes the process of the One unfolding itself into these different principles, and how this is a result of his conclusion from the beginning that the One is causally linked with ‘all things’. As we will see, Damascius’ view of the One implies that it becomes changed, or contextualized, in the process of producing plurality: on the one hand this allows him to close the causal gap between the One and the henads, but then it necessitates a principle of transcendence—i.e. the Ineffable—that grounds the One’s own transcendence and causality. This we will revisit in the final section (5.3).

### 5.2.1 *The Undetermined-Determined Distinction in the One (DP 1,94–98)*

Damascius’ three-fold distinction between the One-All, All-One, and Unified starts with a prior distinction that he makes between the ‘determined One’ and

<sup>72</sup> Compare this with Van Riel (2001a)’s view of the Limit as the first ‘henad’, with the other henads as ‘modalities’ or instantiations of the Limit. Cf. our discussion of the henads for Damascius in p. 148–151.

<sup>73</sup> Adapted from Van Riel (2002)’s diagram in p. 209. Certain details from his diagram are amended: I have made his first ἓν the ‘undetermined One’—since, as will be shown, Damascius equates this to the One *before* it produces the All-One (and becomes the ‘One-All’) and the Unified. I also do not focus on the internal triad, ‘being, life, intelligible-intellect (νοῦς νοητόν)’, *within* the Unified, as in his diagram (as I understand it), but just focus on the three main principles—Being (as νοητόν), Life (as νοητόν–νοερόν), and Intellect (as νοῦς). My arrow between the Unified and ‘Being’ is supposed to be an equation: i.e. ‘Being’ before it becomes differentiated, when Intellect emerges.

the 'undetermined One'. This latter division arises when one attempts to indicate the source of all things in relation to the One: one can consider the One either alongside 'all things', and in that sense determine it, or one can consider the One apart from 'all things', and in that sense not determine it. Our concepts (ἔννοιαι) then come into play insofar as, when we attach a causal role to the One, we are using concepts that only come to be on the level of the effects. In a certain respect, our concepts then fail to attain to the One. Damascius has to account for this in describing the One's causality: i.e. considering the One in its causality, thus 'determined', or by itself apart from its causality, thus 'undetermined'. This forms the backdrop for Damascius' introduction of the transition from the One by itself (as τὸ μόνον ἔν) to the Unified in the causal chain.

The discussion for the 'determined One' in *De Princ.* 1, 94–98 comes after Damascius clarifies in what sense the One is to be identified as 'all things' (τὰ πάντα) in *De Princ.* 1, 89–94. As we saw there, this claim is denied in a literal sense, if that means asserting plurality in the One. Yet in a second, conceptual sense, insofar as the One is the first cause of all things, it is itself τὰ πάντα. But as Damascius repeats in different places, the relation between cause and effect occurs at the level of differentiation:<sup>74</sup> when we get to the One, or entities that exist in the mode of unity (κατὰ τὸ ἕν), such a relation does not obtain. So while Damascius uses the second, conceptual sense to say that the One is τὰ πάντα in *De Princ.* 1,94, it is not clear whether this means the One itself or rather the Unified—since the Unified is both one and plurality together, and consequently the first proximate cause of unity juxtaposed with 'all things' in their differentiated state. Thus in conceptualizing the One, is it the One indicated specifically in the sense of its unity, or also as potentially 'all things'?<sup>75</sup> Or is it neither of these if the One is 'beyond thought', as one finds in the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis?<sup>76</sup>

The answer, it turns out, involves both. In a rather complex passage, Damascius begins by distinguishing two conceptions for the One:

- (C1) That which is 'at hand' (ἡ πρόχειρος ἔννοια) and corresponds with the 'One' at hand (τῷ προχείρῳ ἐνί); and,

74 See e.g. *DP* 1, 90,16 ff.

75 The issue with 'concepts' in Damascius' discussion is not simply an epistemological one: the different levels of concepts, *ennoiai*, also map onto different 'levels' or principles in the realm of the One. Thus, Damascius' discussion of concepts in a metaphysical treatise is not just one that reflects the soul's mode of knowledge alone, but the talk of 'concepts' provide a meaningful way to talk about causality within and from the One—and ultimately the first principle.

76 Plato, *Parm.* 142a3–4.

- (C2) that which is ‘incommensurable’, or what has no common measure (τοῦ ἀσυμμέτρου ταῖς ἡμετέραις ἐννοίαις), with the absolute ‘One’ in itself.<sup>77</sup>

For (C2), the reason for incommensurability with the absolute One is that we do not have any concept that captures its absolute simplicity: our concepts only pertain to other, non-simple objects.<sup>78</sup> Since the objects we conceive exist in distinction, while the One is before all distinction, our concept for the One fails to attain to it. Nevertheless, even with this caveat, when we juxtapose (C2) with (C1), this ends up implying distinction for the One in itself. So in what sense (C2) is undetermined next to (C1) needs to be refined.

Damascius then restarts the question by considering the One, or also the Good,<sup>79</sup> as a particular ‘one’ among the Forms.<sup>80</sup> Damascius does not immediately state why we should think this, although he may be considering the One as like a Form encompassing the Forms. Construed this way, this kind of ‘One’ then implies opposites, like the *Sophist*’s ‘Great Kinds’ (μέγιστα γένη) of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’, and ‘motion’ and ‘rest’, reducible to ‘one’ and ‘many’.<sup>81</sup> As

77 DP 1, 94,13–16: ‘After these things, it is worth seeking in what way the concept of the determined “One”, which is manifested beforehand, differs, and (the undetermined knowledge) of this [One] of which we speak, that which is incommensurable to our concepts. For if the concept at hand is true of the One at hand—since [the concept at hand] is determinative of other realities—it is clear that it will not be applied to the “One” which is undetermined’. (ἐπὶ τούτοις ἄξιον ζητήσεως, ὅπη διαφέρει τοῦ διωρισμένου ἑνὸς ἢ προφανομένη ἔννοια, καὶ τούτου οὐ περὶ λέγομεν, τοῦ ἀσυμμέτρου ταῖς ἡμετέραις ἐννοίαις, \*\*\* ἢ πρόχειρος ἔννοια τῷ προχείρῳ ἐνὶ ἐπαληθεύει, ἢ διωρισμένη τῶν ἄλλων πραγμάτων, δῆλον ὡς ἐκεῖνῳ τῷ ἀδιόριστῳ ἐνὶ οὐκ ἐφαρμόσει.) (Following Westerink-Combès’ suggestion to insert for the lacuna: ... (ἢ ἀδιόριστος γινώσκει. εἰ γάρ). ...).

78 DP 1, 94,15–18. See also 96,1–2, where Damascius specifies: ‘For the determined concept concerns a reality (πράγματος) which is determined’. (ἢ γὰρ διωρισμένη ἔννοια τοῦ διωρισμένου ἐστὶ πρᾶγματος.)

79 DP 1, 94,22–95,1: ‘In addition, the Good seemed to be the very First, since nothing can be greater than it, so that it can indeed be the principle of all things. And because of this, our concepts lead us to identify the One and the Good’. (καὶ γὰρ τάγαθόν πρῶτιστον ἔδοξεν εἶναι, διότι μηδὲν αὐτοῦ κρεῖττον εἶναι δυνατόν, ὥστε καὶ τοῦτο ἀρχὴ τῶν πάντων· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εἰς ταῦτόν ἡμῖν ἄγουσιν αἱ ἔννοιαι τὸ ἐν καὶ τάγαθόν.) Cf. Damascius’ *In Phd.* I, 516,2–16, where Damascius argues that the concepts ‘one’ and ‘good’ indicate distinct meanings, even though both pertain to the same entity (rather unlike Proclus, *ET* Prop. 13, which establishes the identity of the two concepts, regardless of any potential distinction.). On this identification, see Steel (1991).

80 DP 1, 95,1–3: ‘Yet how is the First in distinction and opposition? And how is the First a Form? For a particular ‘One’ is the One and Good which belongs to the many Forms’. (καὶ πῶς ἐν διορισμῷ καὶ ἀντιδιαίρεσει τὸ πρῶτον; πῶς δὲ εἶδος τὸ πρῶτον; ἐν γὰρ τι τῶν πολλῶν εἰδῶν τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν.)

81 See for instance Plato, *Soph.* 244e–245a, 251a–b, where the Stranger admits that being as a whole, if it implies parts, cannot simply be ‘one’ but also ‘many’, and *vice versa*. On the μέγιστα γένη, see 257b, 258e–259a.

in the *Sophist* for sameness and difference, as well as the *Parmenides*' second hypothesis, Damascius says that the opposites in this group participate in each other,<sup>82</sup> while each pair is characterized by a greater and lesser term. Altogether the opposites' coordination implies unity, where they exist within the same order (ἐν ὁμοταγεῖ), in turn implying that they are characterized by unity.<sup>83</sup>

Up to this point, this only describes the attributes of Being for a standard Neoplatonic interpretation, given the reference to the second hypothesis. In one way distinguishing the 'One' as a principle from the 'one' as a predicate of Being should be straightforward, coming from Proclus and previous Neoplatonists. However since opposition characterizes the 'One' that pertains to Being, one may think that the 'One' as principle, i.e. (C2), is also characterized in its subsistence by opposition. As we next see, Damascius makes a distinction between these two kinds of 'opposition'. Damascius first states that the 'One' characterized by opposites implies that 'one' and 'many' are in each other:<sup>84</sup>

Therefore it is not the principle, because the many (τὰ πολλά) have been unified by this 'One'. But that by which the many have been unified, the latter is the 'One'. And that which is in them [*scil.* the many] is participated, while that which is by subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν) and from itself is before the many. Thus it is before all things (πρὸ τῶν πάντων), and therefore this 'One' is the principle of all things. For if the many are opposed to [this One], it is in no way as belonging exactly to the same order, but as the effects are related to the cause.

Besides which, if that which brings together (συναγωγόν) all things is the One—for what is characteristic (ἴδιον) of it is [being] a producer of unity (ἐνοποιόν) and cause of the mixture—and [if] being a producer of unity (ἐνοποιόν) and what brings together (συναγωγόν) is higher than all things and more elevated than that which is brought together (συναγομένων) and made one (ἐνοποιουμένων), then it is clear that the One is the principle of all things, that it has been contra-distinguished in relation to all things, just as the cause is in relation to the effects. And it is this that we make known as 'One'.

DP 1, 95,10–23

82 DP 1, 95,9–11; Damascius explicitly references the *Parmenides*' second hypothesis in this passage.

83 DP 1, 95,7–8.

84 DP 1, 95, 8–10.

οὐκ ἄρα ἀρχή, διότι τῷ ἐνὶ τούτῳ ἡγνῶται τὰ πολλά, καθ' ὃ δὲ τὰ πολλά ἡγνῶται, τοῦτο ἐν· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐν αὐτοῖς μετεχόμενον, τὸ δὲ καθ' ὅ ὑπαρξιν καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν· πρὸ τῶν πάντων ἄρα· ἀρχή ἄρα τῶν πάντων τοῦτο τὸ ἐν. εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἀντίκειται αὐτῷ τὰ πολλά, ἀλλ' οὐτι γέ ὡς ὁμοταγῇ, ὡς τὰ αἰτιατά δὲ πρὸς τὸ αἷτιον.

χωρὶς δὲ τούτων, εἰ τὸ πάντων συναγωγόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν (ἴδιον γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐνοποιὸν καὶ τῆς μίξεως αἷτιον), τὸ δὲ ἐνοποιὸν καὶ συναγωγὸν τῶν πάντων πρεσβύτερόν ἐστι καὶ ὑπέρτερον τῶν συναγομένων καὶ ἐνοποιουμένων, φανερόν ὅτι τὸ ἐν ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρχή τῶν πάντων, ὅπερ ἀντιδιήρηται πρὸς πάντα, ὡς αἷτιον (πρὸς) τὰ αἰτιατά, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ γνωρίζομεν ὡς ἐν.

Damascius gives two reasons for why the One-proper (C<sub>2</sub>) is the cause of the unity of the opposites—implicitly pertaining to the 'One at hand' (C<sub>1</sub>): first, by not belonging to the same order of opposites as a cause, and second, by having its unique character as a producer of unity (ἐνοποιὸν). The first case revives the argument from *De Princ.* 1, 1–2, where Damascius' condition for something to be a principle (ἀρχή) is that it must be prior to, and not with, the things it explains or brings about. Damascius there included the relation of cause and effect among cases where the principle is 'with' its effect, rather than prior. As a result, any entity that implies opposition, even as a cause, cannot be a principle. However in this case Damascius modifies the criterion: to be a principle means to transcend the opposites within a given order (ὁμοταγεῖ), even if it is a cause of those entities that exist in opposition. Damascius' concern for the kind of principle here is not that it transcends the opposition between cause and effect—as we saw in *De Princ.* 1, 1–2—but only that it transcends opposition *within* the effects, insofar as they have unity as a received property. The One can then be considered a principle in this specific sense, as a cause, in contrast to the Ineffable which, as a principle, transcends the opposition of cause and effect.<sup>85</sup>

This construal of the One echoes Proclus' formulation in *ET* Prop. 5, where the One is prior as a cause by uniting the opposed entities, plurality and unity. In this, Proclus generally follows the *Philebus*' model of the 'Cause' which unites the Limit and Unlimited in the Mixed—which Damascius also references, above, when he describes the One as 'cause of the mixture' (τῆς μίξεως αἷτιον). Also following Proclus,<sup>86</sup> Damascius further adds that the One is what 'brings together' (συναγωγόν) all things, which he connects with the One

85 By implication the One, as Damascius concluded in *DP* 1, 4.

86 See *ET* Prop. 13, 14,32; cf. Westerink-Combès' note n. 2 (p. 165) in *DP* 1, 95,12.



being a producer of unity (ἐνοποιόν). So far, like Proclus, Damascius sees the *Philebus*' model of causality as essential to explain how the One is the cause of all things.

At the same time, Damascius changes the interpretation of the 'Cause' from the *Philebus*, particularly in how the Cause relates to the Limit and Unlimited.<sup>87</sup> For Damascius, the Mixture is equated with 'all things', yet if the One is synonymous with 'all things', in addition to being the *Philebus*' Cause, then it would also need to anticipate the Limit and Unlimited which make up 'all things'. For Proclus, this is not the case, at least explicitly: true, the Limit and Unlimited are called 'manifestations' (ἐμφάσεις) of the One, and therefore henads,<sup>88</sup> but the One does not imply or pre-contain the different characters that distinguish the two. Damascius makes this inference explicit, starting when he gives his exegesis of the four 'kinds' in the *Philebus*—namely the 'Cause', 'Limit', 'Unlimited', and 'Mixed'—and the One's relation to these:

What then? Does the One not bring together (συνάγει) all things, and does not Socrates in the *Philebus* make it a cause of the mixture? Certainly, but he does so by putting it forward as one unique character (ιδίωμα) according to unity, as both what brings together (συναγωγόν) and what makes unity (ἐνοποιόν). For there was need of this [unique character] for those things,<sup>89</sup> since the Limit was 'one', the Unlimited 'one', and the Mixed 'one'. Indeed, it is necessary that that entity is not cause of the mixture only, as it appears to be called, but also of the elements.

DP 1, 96,10–16

τί οὖν; οὐ συνάγει τὰ πάντα καὶ τῆς μίξεως ἐκεῖνο αἰτιᾶται ὁ ἐν Φιλήβῳ Σωκράτης; πάντως δήπου, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ ἐν μόνον ἰδίωμα αὐτὸ προβαλλόμενος τὸ συναγωγόν τε καὶ ἐνοποιόν· τούτου γὰρ ἐκεῖνοις ἐδεῖτο, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ πέρας ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον ἐν, καὶ τὸ μικτὸν ἐν· καὶ οὐ δεῖ τῆς μίξεως μόνῃς αἴτιον ἐκεῖνο ὡς δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν στοιχείων.

87 Damascius' interpretation of the *Philebus* framework of principles, it should be noted, is a radical re-appropriation from previous Neoplatonists. On this in general see Van Riel (2002).

88 Proclus, *PT* III.9, 36,10–19; cf. discussion in p. 211–212.

89 The reference behind this demonstrative pronoun is not clear, but it seems Damascius refers to the properties of συναγωγόν and ἐνοποιόν. The idea seems to be that unity, as the 'Cause', needs to account for these two properties of producing unity and 'bringing together'.

In calling the Limit, Unlimited, and Mixed ‘one’, Damascius is likely referring to passages in the *Philebus* where Socrates calls these three kinds ‘unities’, while he also describes them as forms.<sup>90</sup> More proximately Damascius connects this exegesis with a previous discussion which considers the ‘One’ as a genus or form,<sup>91</sup> which implicitly refers back to the ‘determined One’ (C1). In that case Damascius says that each ‘one’ does not have the same function as just a ‘one-producer’ (ἐνοποιόν), as he earlier calls the One, but rather each is named according to its respective effect: e.g. as a ‘plurality-producer’ (πληθοποιόν), ‘beauty-producer’ (καλοποιόν), ‘whole-producer’ (ὅλοποιόν), and so on.<sup>92</sup> As a result, while the One is simple in itself, when considered as the producer of items that have different names, the One is then named by the respective attribute that it produces.<sup>93</sup>

In the *Philebus* exegesis, above, Damascius connects this discussion with the Limit being ‘one’, the Unlimited being ‘one’, and the Mixed being ‘one’: in other words the One produces as ‘Limit’, as ‘Unlimited’, and as ‘Mixed’ or mixture. This is likely why Damascius adds that the One should be the cause not only of the ‘mixture’ but also the elements—in other words, the immanent properties, ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’, within the mixture. While not explicit here, Damascius later mentions in *De Princ.* I, 106, that Plato implicitly leaves out a distinction between ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ as elements in the Mixed (μικτόν) compared to the principles before the Mixed.<sup>94</sup> This gives him justification to posit a cause of the *combination* of the Mixed—that is, the ‘formula’ that results in the mixed compounds, as well as the ‘elements’ within each compound.

What this means exactly is elaborated on the next page, when Damascius returns to the question of the identity between the ‘elements’ in the Mixed and the Limit and Unlimited themselves prior to the Mixed:

90 E.g. Plato, *Phil.* 16d1–2.

91 *DP* I, 95,23–96,1: ‘Yet is there not another “one”, for example that which is so-called as a genus? It must be mentioned that, on the one hand, we make known “one” in the sense of a genus, as being a certain thing among all things, just as the many are this certain thing [*scil.* “one”] (I call Form), as well as good and beautiful’. (ἄλλο δὲ οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἓν, οἷον τὸ ὡς γένος λεγόμενον; ἢ ῥητέον ὅτι τὸ μὲν ὡς γένος ἐν γνωρίζομεν ὡς τὶ τῶν πάντων ὄν, ὡς τὰ πολλὰ τί, λέγω τὸ εἶδος, καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ καλόν.)

92 In this respect Damascius may be thinking of the henads from Proclus, where each produces according to its unique character. Support for this might be found in *DP* I, 95,12, with the ‘One’ (C1) there being called ‘participated’ (μετεχόμενον). However this judgment is tentative: henads are not specified, and the context does not make it explicitly clear if Damascius means ‘one’ in a predicated sense, or ‘one’ as a self-subsistent principle of unity—or if he conflates the two, as he is likely doing here.

93 *DP* I, 96,1–9.

94 *DP* I, 106,14–18. Cf. Van Riel (2002) 216.

Regarding these things, the cause of the Mixed was the cause of the totality, and not just of the mixture, which that which is only one (τὸ μόνον ἓν) seems to make. But rather, neither does mixture nor that which brings together (συναγωγόν) belong to the One, but it is indeed unity that pertains to the One-only, while [there is a] cause pertaining to mixture, bringing-together, unification (ἐνώσεως),<sup>95</sup> and differentiation (διακρίσεως). For mixture is in both [causes],<sup>96</sup> and bringing-together, commonality (κοινωνία), and all that which is such is a certain combination (συναμφότερον) of the two, and not unity-only or differentiation-only: for the latter is without coordination, while the former is without plurality. For unification (ἐνωσις) means 'One' and a trace of 'One' (ἐνὸς ἵχνος),<sup>97</sup> for which reason it proceeds from that which is one-only, just as differentiation proceeds from that which is plurality-only (μόνου πλήθους), and commonality [proceeds] from that which is both a unity-maker (ἐνοποιού) and plurality-maker (πληθοποιού), which is before both [of these].

DP 1, 97,9–20

πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τὸ τοῦ μικτοῦ αἴτιον τοῦ παντός ἦν αἴτιον καὶ οὐ μόνης τῆς μίξεως, ὃ δοκεῖ ποιεῖν τὸ μόνον ἓν· μάλλον δὲ οὐδὲ ἡ μίξις τοῦ ἐνὸς οὐδὲ ἡ συναγωγή, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς μόνου τό γε ἓν, τὸ δὲ τῆς μίξεως καὶ συναγωγῆς καὶ τῆς ἐνώσεως καὶ τῆς διακρίσεως αἴτιον. ἡ γὰρ μίξις ἐν ἀμφοῖν, καὶ ἡ συναγωγή καὶ ἡ κοινωνία καὶ πᾶν ὃ τι τοιοῦτον συναμφότερόν τί ἐστιν, οὐ μόνον ἐνωσις, οὐδὲ μόνον διάκρισις· αὕτη γὰρ ἀσύντακτος, ἐκείνη δὲ ἀπλήθυντος. ἡ γὰρ ἐνωσις ἐν βούλεται εἶναι καὶ ἐνὸς ἵχνος, διὸ καὶ ἀπὸ μόνου πρόεισι τοῦ ἐνὸς ὄντος, ὥσπερ ἡ διάκρισις ἀπὸ μόνου τοῦ πλήθους, ἡ δὲ κοινωνία ἀπὸ τοῦ ἅμα καὶ ἐνοποιού καὶ πληθοποιού, ὃ ἐστὶ πρὸ ἀμφοῖν.

95 I use the translation, 'unification', cautiously here: ἐνωσις does not mean being *made* one, or undergoing unity, but rather an activity or process of unity. So in this sense it would be analogous to being a ἐνοποιόν.

96 I take it Damascius here means the latter 'two' entities, i.e. unity (ἐνωσις) and differentiation (διάκρισις). That 'mixture' is 'in' both unity and differentiation, I would also interpret as mixture *involves* both elements/entities—not that mixture is in each entity, separately—since the argument seems to rely on this notion, namely 'mixture' implies the entities to be mixed.

97 'Trace' (ἵχνος) usually indicates an external effect, like an imprint, from a separate cause, as with the 'traces of the Forms' found in matter, or as here, 'trace of the One' in Plotinus to indicate the presence of unity, as an effect, pointing back to the One (for cases of Soul's trace in matter, e.g., see Plotinus, *Enn.* IV.4.18, esp. lines 1–9, 31; *Enn.* VI.4.15, esp. line 15). Cf. Proclus, *De Decem Dub.* 64,10 (soul referenced as having 'hidden trace of the One'); 5,8 ('one' of providence imparts unity as 'trace' of it). Cf. Van Riel (2011), esp. 194–195, on the One's/henads' 'trace' in matter.

Damascius breaks from most traditional interpretations of the ‘cause’ from the *Philebus*, particularly those like Proclus’ which straightforwardly identify the One with the ‘cause of the mixture’. One sees this in the initial formulation of the traditional position, with the One as the cause of the mixture and ‘all’, before he starts his own interpretation after μάλλον δὲ in line 97,10.<sup>98</sup> Damascius emphasizes that the effect of the One is simply oneness, and instead the characters of ‘bringing-together’ and mixture belong to another principle which contains both unity and differentiation within itself—implicitly the ‘Unified’, as we saw earlier in *De Princ.* 1, 3–4. One can see Damascius here employing a strict view of causal synonymy between cause and effect: the effect of τὸ μόνον ἔν can only be unity, and in turn the cause of the mixed (τὸ μικτόν) must also be ‘mixed’ in its character,<sup>99</sup> that is in having both unity and plurality in itself. Because the mixture contains both unity and plurality, Damascius posits respective causes for these that are unity-only and plurality-only. If we recall Damascius’ earlier statement that the ‘cause’ of the mixture should also be the cause of the elements, we may see that premise implicitly affirmed in the final line: the cause of the mixture, which proceeds from both causes of unity and plurality, is ‘before both’—i.e. before unity and plurality, as elements.

One can see this interpretation borne out in Damascius’ *Philebus Commentary*, when Damascius responds to Proclus’ account of Being which has its elements come from two separate causes—the Limit and Unlimited. Damascius responds that the elements must be pre-contained in one cause, rather than two, for the generation of the Mixed, or Being:

It is better to regard, on the one hand, the two principles [*scil.* the Limit and Unlimited] as whole orders (ὅλους διακόσμους) that are simpler than the Mixed, while in the first Mixed (or rather in the cause of the Mixed) to bring the elements to existence together (or rather the causes of the elements) which are secondary after the principles, and [since they are] in the Mixed itself, they are inferior to the Mixed, just as everywhere the elements are inferior to that of which they are elements. For the same also holds for the causes.

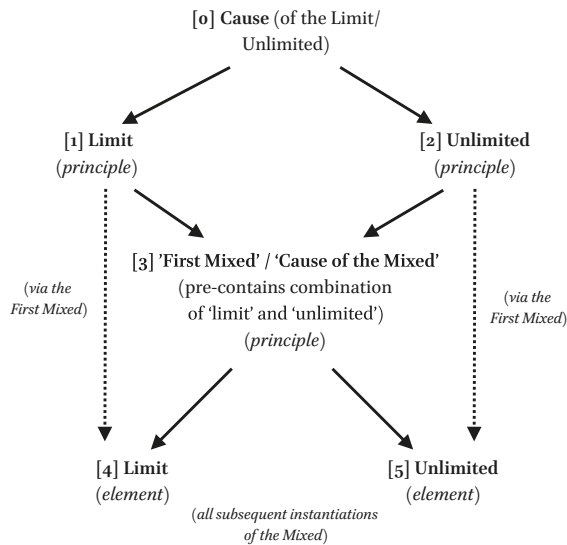
*In Phil.* 104,5–10

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- 98 Damascius typically uses this construction in commentaries like the *Phaedo Commentary*, after he summarizes one position, such as Proclus’ position.
- 99 Noticeably, however, Damascius always uses μίξις and not μικτόν—implying ‘mixture’ as an activity, on the side of the cause, not ‘mixed’ as an effect.

ἄμεινον δὲ τὰς μὲν δύο ἀρχὰς ὡς ὅλους νοεῖν διακόσμους τοῦ μικτοῦ ἀπλουστε-  
ρους, ἐν δὲ τῷ μικτῷ πρώτῳ (μᾶλλον δὲ τῷ αἰτίῳ τοῦ μικτοῦ) συνυφιστάναι τὰ  
στοιχεῖα (μᾶλλον δὲ τὰ αἷτια τῶν στοιχείων) δεύτερα ὄντα μετὰ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἐν  
αὐτῷ τῷ μικτῷ καταδεέστερα τοῦ μικτοῦ, ὥσπερ ἀπανταχοῦ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ  
στοιχειωτοῦ· οὕτω γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν αἰτίων ἔχει.

Damascius appears to have in mind a kind of duplication between the level of principles and the level of the effects: on the one hand, the Limit and Unlimited must pre-exist the Mixed, insofar as the two principles are simpler, but the Mixed must 'bring to existence' the two elements together within itself. In this sense, the 'first' Mixed cannot simply be the sum of the Limit and Unlimited added together, but it must rather be a principle that implies both Limit and Unlimited within itself. Another way to put it would be that the 'formula' for all mixed entities must pre-exist the actual mixture of the distinct elements that make up that mixture.<sup>100</sup>

This would then lead to the following picture for Damascius' interpretation of the *Philebus* for the relation of the 'elements' and the principles of the Limit and Unlimited for the Mixed, or Being (τὸ ὄν):



<sup>100</sup> Here Proclus' proof (*ET* Prop. 69) for the existence of the whole-before-parts is apt, insofar as it is the unparticipated cause of every instantiation of a whole-of-parts. Cf. p. 106–107.

This picture can be confirmed if we look later in the Commentary, when Damascius asks whether differentiation results in the intelligible world or below it, since Being is characterized by unity. Damascius then opts for the former option with his position succinctly stated:

We say that it would be better to make the One the ‘Cause’ of all things (πάντων), and the Limit of unification (ένώσεως), the Unlimited of differentiation (διακρίσεως), and the Mixed (τὸ μικτόν) of what participates in both.

*In Phil.* 108,4–5

ἦν δὲ ἂν ἄμεινον τὸ μὲν ἐν πάντων αἴτιον ποιεῖν, ένώσεως δὲ τὸ πέρας, διακρίσεως δὲ τὸ ἄπειρον, τοῦ δὲ μετέχοντος ἀμφοῖν τὸ μικτόν.

With the previous passage in mind, Damascius here calls the Mixed a cause of ‘what participates in both’: in this respect the Mixed is a cause of entities that have the combination of (4) and (5). This would correlate with our description of the Unified in the last section as both ‘one’ and plurality together, while here the Mixed has the combination of ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ together (ultimately Damascius’ interpretation of the *Philebus*’ Mixed is linked with the Unified). Also noteworthy is Damascius calling the One—without calling it either ‘determined’ or ‘undetermined’ here—the cause of ‘all things’, which appears to encompass all three other categories of Limit, Unlimited, and Mixed.

On the face of it this does not sound different from Proclus’ framework, where Being fills the position of the *Philebus*’ Mixed, since Being also contains the elements of ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ together, and all beings which contain the ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ derive from Being-itself.<sup>101</sup> What is different in Damascius’ presentation is that the Mixed, or Unified, is not simply an effect of the combination—as in Proclus’ account—but it is also a principle of the combination of ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ in all lower beings. Whereas in Proclus all beings are derived from, and separately participate in, two principles—the Limit and Unlimited<sup>102</sup>—in Damascius all beings which contain ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ as elements are derived from *one* principle, the Unified, which contains the Limit and Unlimited together. It is only in the resulting derivations from the Unified that there is a progressive separation between the elements

101 Proclus, *ET* Prop. 89.

102 Proclus, *ET* Prop. 90.

of 'limit' (4) and 'unlimited' (5). Insofar as the Unified is such a cause in this respect, rather than just the effect of combination, Damascius shifts away from Proclus' interpretation of the *Philebus*.<sup>103</sup>

Going back to the distinction between the 'undetermined One' and 'determined One' in *De Princ.* 1, 97–98, Damascius ultimately re-appropriates the *Philebus*' framework within his interpretation of principles. The 'undetermined One' then fills the role of the 'Cause' prior to the three principles, Limit, Unlimited, and Mixture/Unified:

Further now, if someone were also to call this One that which is before all things by the difficulty of its proper name (for there is neither a unique character concerning it, nor in it), nevertheless in the same way it will differ from the determined One (C1). For the latter unites the determined entities, not eliminating their determined state, nor erasing their circumscription. Accordingly those things [*scil.* the determined entities] remain such as they are, thereafter they are united in such ways in relation to each other. By contrast, the One before all things (πρὸ πάντων), if indeed it is even 'One', gives off unity (ἐνδιδωσιν ἕνωσιν) which is before every circumscription (περιγραφῆς), and even the same [unity] is not determined in relation to the others (τὰ ἄλλα), but is, as it were, the undifferentiated root (ρίζαν ἀδιάκριτον) of every existence of each.

DP 1, 97,21–98,4

103 Pace Van Riel (2002) 217, n. 82, where he sees Damascius re-summarizing Proclus' position in the *Philebus Commentary*. However in light of the context of *In Phil.* 104, above, this is not so apparent. Further Van Riel (in Damascius (2008) 33, n. 4) says that Damascius changes his view in the *De Principiis* about the cause of differentiation, that it is the 'All-One' (πάντα ἓν) rather than the Unlimited. Yet Damascius uses the *Philebus* framework in the *DP* as a bridge to his own framework for the One-All/All-One/Unified. Furthermore, Westerink-Combès in *DP* 1, 97, n. 4, assert a correlation between *DP* 1, 97,9–20 and *In Phil.* 108,4–5; as in our interpretation, they correlate *DP*'s 'One-only' (μόνον ἓν) to *In Phil.*'s 'Cause of all things'; the ἐνοποιὸν (unity-producer) and πληθοποιὸν (plurality-producer) to *In Phil.*'s Limit and Unlimited; and the Mixed, as cause of what participates both union and distinction. Significant for Westerink-Combès' interpretation is the sense of what participates 'both' unity and differentiation in *In Phil.* 108,5: τοῦ δὲ μετέχοντος ἀμφοῖν τὸ μικτόν. Westerink-Combès understand the 'elements' in the produced mixture which participate 'both' unity and plurality. By contrast, Van Riel's (apparently Proclean) interpretation suggests that the Mixed itself is that which participates unity and plurality, as well as whatever the Mixed causes in turn. Van Riel, however, does not mention Westerink-Combès' interpretation of the 'One-only' (τὸ μόνον ἓν) as the *Philebean* 'Cause' in 1, 97, which they distinguish from the ἐνοποιὸν as analogous to the *Philebus*' Limit (see e.g. the diagrams in Van Riel (2002) 216–217).



ἔτι τοίνυν εἰ καὶ τοῦτο καλοῖ τις ἐν τῷ πρὸ πάντων ἀπορίᾳ τοῦ ἰδίου ὀνόματος (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐπ' ἐκείνου ἴδιον οὐδὲ ἐν ἐκείνῳ), ἀλλ' ὅμως διοίσει τοῦ διωρισμένου ἑνός. τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ ἐνίζει τὰ διωρισμένα, οὐ συγχέον αὐτῶν τὸν διορισμὸν οὐδὲ ἀπαλείφον τὰς περιγραφάς· τοιγαροῦν ἐκεῖνα, οἷά ἐστι μένοντα, ἔπειτα οὕτως ἐνοῦται πρὸς ἄλληλα· τὸ δὲ πρὸ πάντων ἓν, εἴπερ καὶ ἓν, πρὸ πάσης περιγραφῆς οὔσαν ἐνδίδωσιν ἔνωσιν, καὶ οὐδὲ ταύτην πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα διωρισμένην, ἀλλ' οἷον ῥίζαν ἀδιάκριτον πάσης τῆς ἐκάστου ὑποστάσεως.

In the previous discussion, Damascius brought in the *Philebus* model of the four principles while distinguishing the determined One from the undetermined One, where the different senses in which the One is determined (C1) were subsumed under the three principles of the 'unity-maker' (ἐνοποιὸν)/Limit, 'plurality-maker' (πληθοποιὸν)/Unlimited, and the 'Mixture' (μίξις) of both (i.e. the Unified). Damascius calls all three 'one' in distinct senses, and in the passage above we get the criteria for what ties them together in being called 'one': the 'one' in this sense preserves 'circumscription' and 'determination' for each particular entity, in other words the unity of the kinds such as the good, beautiful, etc. The undetermined One (C2) only produces unity, as seen above, although Damascius uses ἐνδίδωσιν ('giving forth' or 'giving in') for the latter, rather than the stronger verb, ἐνοποιὸν (unity-producer), that is juxtaposed with the producer of plurality (πληθοποιὸν). Whereas the latter is tied with the kind of unity found in the Mixture, Damascius defines this sense of the 'One' as a detached, 'undetermined root' (ρίζαν), which suggests that it grounds the ἐνοποιὸν, πληθοποιὸν, and μίξις.

This, however, raises a question about the ontological status of the 'undetermined One': in what sense does it cause or 'ground' the ἐνοποιὸν, πληθοποιὸν, and the μίξις? Because the One here is said to be 'before all things' (πρὸ τῶν πάντων), and implicitly not 'all things', or synonymous with all things, this would run counter to Damascius' earlier emphasis that the One causes all things by being synonymous with 'all things' in itself. The latter suggests, at this point, that Damascius has in mind the 'One' as determined into the three principles of the ἐνοποιὸν, πληθοποιὸν, and the μίξις. Consequently, we are left with three possible ways that one could interpret the 'undetermined One': either (a), in a nominalistic way, as an undetermined concept before it is analyzed into the three determined principles; or (b), as standing in for the Ineffable itself, which has no causal relation to the 'determined One', i.e. the three principles; or (c), as an intermediate stage of the One in itself before it distinguishes itself into the three distinct principles.

We should investigate these three options in the next section, where (c) is ultimately how Damascius should be understood in this context. Once more

Damascius' causal framework, which we saw in Chapter 3, is a crucial factor: just as Being acts on and distinguishes itself in causing Intellect, in the same way the One as undetermined acts on and distinguishes itself as 'One-All' (i.e. ἐνοποιόν) in deriving the 'All-One' (i.e. πληθοποιόν) and the Unified (i.e. μίξις) from itself.

### 5.2.2 *The One Distinguished as Remaining, Procession, Reversion κατὰ ἀναλογίαν*

How we are to understand the relation between the 'undetermined One' and the three principles is brought out in *De Princ.* I, 126–130, where Damascius concludes a series of aporetic questions on the One's relation to the procession of 'all things' (τὰ πάντα) from it—both the henads, Being, matter, and so on.<sup>104</sup> In *De Princ.* I, 126–128, Damascius again raises the difficulty of how the One can be understood as the cause of all things in light of its simplicity. Taken from the One's perspective, terms like 'cause' or 'caused' cannot be ascribed to it, much less any denomination, as we have already seen with the 'undetermined One'. From the side of the effects, however, we run into another *aporia*: if all things still receive their existence from the One, does that not suggest *some* form of distinction in the One—i.e. with the One counter-distinguished as a cause? It is with this difficulty in mind that Damascius considers another way to understand the One from the side of the effects by way of analogous predication in *De Princ.* I, 129–130—where we may better understand Damascius' 'undetermined One' in light of options (a)–(c).<sup>105</sup>

But first we should look more closely at the difficulty raised in 126–128, especially brought forward in this passage:

If then the second is distinguished from the first, it is entirely the case that the first is distinguished from the second: for that which is differentiated is differentiated from what is differentiated (τὸ διακρινόμενον διακρινόμενου διακρίνεται). But if this is so, either it is from the second,

<sup>104</sup> *DP* I, 99,1–126,14.

<sup>105</sup> One may note a parallel here in the structure of argumentation to Plotinus' *Enn.* vi.8.7–22, where Plotinus defends the origination of self-determination (τὸ ἐφ' ἑμῖν) in the One—i.e. when Plotinus initially uses negative predication in vi.8.7–12, in speaking of the One in a literal way, while in vi.8.13 allows for metaphorical terms to be predicated of the One when departing from 'speaking correctly' (ὁρθῶς εἰρηγται) for the sake of 'persuasion': cf. discussion in p. 38–40. Here also we find Damascius following a similar line of thought: initially in denying procession or all causal language in the domain of the One, while from the domain of the effects, similarly to Plotinus' 'persuasion', Damascius permits analogical predication.

differentiating itself, and it has undergone differentiation (and how will the cause have been altered from the effect, so that it has then undergone something?); or it acquired this feature from itself, and in differentiating the second from itself, it is also what differentiates itself from the former—and how is that which is not even deemed to be a unity-maker (ἐνοποιὸν) able to differentiate? And generally how has it been distinguished from the second, or also how has it been united (ῥηνεται) to that which undergoes neither union nor distinction in relation to all things?

But if it has not been distinguished, how is the one a cause, the other an effect? And how is it the case that the begotten is not entirely indistinguishable (ἀπαρραλλακτεῖ)<sup>106</sup> from the begetter?<sup>107</sup> Perhaps it is then safer to say (that) the first—as both without unification and differentiation, just as it is beyond unity and plurality—produces all things, as it was called beforehand, in an unlike mode, and it has been separated from all things and is within totality in another similar mode.

DP 1, 127,19–128,10

εἰ τοῖνυν διεκρίθη τὸ δεύτερον ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου, πάντως ὅτι καὶ τὸ πρῶτον διεκρίθη τοῦ δευτέρου· τὸ γὰρ διακρινόμενον διακρινομένου διακρίνεται. ἀλλ' εἰ τοῦτο, ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ δευτέρου, διακρίναντος ἑαυτὸ, πέπονθε καὶ αὐτὸ τὴν διάκρισιν, (καὶ πῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰτιατοῦ τὸ αἷτιον ἡλλοίωται [πῶς]<sup>108</sup> ἢ ὅτι οὖν πέπονθεν;) ἢ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἔσχεν τοῦτο, καὶ ἐν τῷ διακρίνειν τὸ δεύτερον ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἑαυτὸ διακρίνειν ἀπ' ἐκείνου,—καὶ πῶς ἐστὶ διακριτικὸν ὃ γε οὐδὲ ἐνοποιὸν ἡξίωσεν εἶναι; πῶς δὲ ὅλως διακέκριται τοῦ δευτέρου, ἢ καὶ ῥηνεται πρὸς αὐτὸ ὃ γε πρὸς οὐδὲν τῶν πάντων ἔνωσιν ἢ διάκρισιν ὑπομένει;

ἀλλ' εἰ μὴ διακέκριται, πῶς τὸ μὲν αἷτιον, τὸ δὲ αἰτιατόν; πῶς δὲ οὐ πάντη ἀπαρραλλακτεῖ πρὸς τὸ γεννῶν τὸ γεννώμενον; μήποτε οὖν ἀσφαλέστερον λέγειν (ὅτι) τὸ πρῶτον ἄνευ τε ἐνώσεως καὶ ἄνευ διακρίσεως, ἅτε καὶ ἐνὸς καὶ

106 See Westerink-Combès' note here (DP 1, 128, n. 1): 'La verbe ἀπαρραλλακτεῖν, qui ne se trouve qu'ici, ne paraît dans aucun dictionnaire, et il serait facile de corriger par ἀπαράλλακται. Mais la formation est correcte (cf. ἀτακτεῖν, ἀταρακτεῖν, et le nom ἀπαρραλλάξια), et Damascius aime les néologismes'. Concerning ἀπαρραλλάξια, Liddell-Scott note the word's source in Stoic literature, Philodemus' *On Signs* (6,37), translating as 'indistinguishability', or 'unshakeable determination'. Roughly following this ancestry, I use the former translation.

107 Compare this with DP 1, 2,7–8, where the first principle is placed in the position of the 'begetter' (γενήτορα) in contrast with the 'begotten' (γεννηθέντας).

108 Agreeing with Westerink-Combès' deletion, since it appears to be a repetition—although the question could also be: 'How is the cause altered in some way ...'. But the 'how' in the question already makes this apparent.

πλήθους ἐπέκεινα ὄν, πάντα παράγει, ὡς πρόσθεν εἴρηται, τὸν ἀσύμφυλον τρόπον, καὶ πάντων κεχώρισται καὶ πάσιν ἔνεστιν τρόπον ἕτερον τοιοῦτον.

In the first paragraph, Damascius implicitly references the problem, which we saw in Chapter 3, of Being (i.e. the Unified) and its production of Intellect: there he accepts that Being becomes differentiated in the process of producing, since causes act on themselves while acting on their effects, as Being makes itself intelligible in producing Intellect.<sup>109</sup> This, however, is a problem for the One: if it produces the second principle after itself, specifically in a way which implies separation from it, then it will act on itself by producing itself as differentiated—in other words it will produce itself as a ‘one’ opposed to plurality.<sup>110</sup> But if the One is the cause of unity, and is not characterized by differentiation or opposition, then what comes after it also cannot imply differentiation.

Damascius’ answer in the second paragraph gives us an initial step toward addressing the difficulty. Damascius concedes that, despite there being no distinction between cause and effect in the One, *some* form of distinction is still present when we look at the One from the perspective of ‘all things’, i.e. its external effect. It is then ‘safer’ to maintain that the One produces ‘in an unlike mode’ (τὸν ἀσύμφυλον τρόπον): the One may be grouped with its effect, ‘all things’, yet still ‘in another similar mode’ (τρόπον ἕτερον τοιοῦτον). This balances both the One’s simplicity and its proximity to its differentiated effect. In this sense, Damascius so concludes, distinction does originate ‘from’, or ‘in’, the One, at the same time that a distinction also obtains between a ‘first’ and a ‘second’ principle, i.e. the principles of unity (ἐνώσεως, or implicitly ἐνοποιὸν) and distinction (διακρίσεως, or implicitly πληθοποιὸν).<sup>111</sup> Yet here Damascius qualifies that we are still dealing with ‘entirely undifferentiated’ principles (τῶν πάντῃ ἀδιορίστων): thus, as we saw with Proclus’ henads, the *Sophist*’s categories of sameness and difference (ταυτότης καὶ ἑτερότης) do not apply to these principles<sup>112</sup> since they transcend the intelligible world, i.e. ‘all

<sup>109</sup> See *DP* 11, 158,8–16. Cf. p. 126–127.

<sup>110</sup> This would make sense of lines 128,7–8, ‘the first—as both without unification (ἐνώσεως) and differentiation, just as it is beyond (ἐπέκεινα) unity and plurality ...’.

<sup>111</sup> *DP* 1, 128,10–15: ‘Yet that from which distinction may begin, that which is transcendent, or has been coordinated, and generally [the first] and the second, will also begin from this. For ourselves, we say these things about those principles, wishing only to indicate something about principles which are entirely undetermined’. (ἀφ’ οὗ δὴ ἂν ἄρξῃται ἡ διακρίσις, ἀπὸ τούτου καὶ τὸ ἐξηρημένον ἢ συντεταγμένον, καὶ ὧς τὸ πρότερον ἄρξεται καὶ δεύτερον ἡμεῖς (δὲ) καὶ ταῦτα περὶ ἐκείνων λέγομεν ἐνδεκνυσθαί τι μόνον βουλόμενοι περὶ τῶν πάντῃ ἀδιορίστων.)

<sup>112</sup> *DP* 1, 128,17–20.

things' (τὰ πάντα) in themselves. In a sense we are back to the initial problem at the beginning: while Damascius grants that differentiation originates in the One—and while that implies that the One is distinguished into two principles—we cannot articulate in any meaningful way how the One is distinguished into two.

Soon afterward in *De Princ.* I, 128–129, Damascius responds to this problem by positing 'stages' in the One: as the stages of remaining, procession, and reversion exist in differentiation for 'all things' (i.e. within the intelligible triad of Being, Life, and Intellect), so these three stages may be ascribed to the One 'by analogy' (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν):

But if someone, as grasping in darkness, wishes to see these [stages]<sup>113</sup> in the same way in those principles through analogy (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν)—not through indication (κατὰ ἔνδειξιν), but in a stronger way than that, according to the truth which is able to be indicated (ἐνδείκνυσθαι)—let (1) that [*scil.* the first] be analogous to the cause which remains; (2) [let] that which primarily (πρώτως) proceeds from [the first] [be analogous] to procession and the principle of procession properly called (κυρίως); and (3) [let] the third principle from [the first] [be analogous] to the cause which reverts. And if we separate these same principles in the ways in which we consider them, then we will know that analogy will be fitting to them. Except that it should already be sought henceforth whether what remains (τὸ μένον) is different from that which is established from the beginning as One-All (ἐν πάντα), since the latter is not determined. Among the principles after it, which are three [in number], one may say that what remains is the first, since if these principles are entirely perfect and each is undetermined, something further may rather be indicated: (1) by remaining (κατὰ τὸ μένον) one thing further may be indicated, and (2) another by that which proceeds (κατὰ τὸ προϊόν), and (3) another by that which reverts itself (κατὰ τὸ ἐπιστρεφόμενον).

DP I, 129,1–16

113 Westerink-Combès translate as 'on voulait [...] apercevoir ces [trois] moments ...'. Rather than 'moments' I translate as 'stages', both in matching common terminology for the intelligible triad, and insofar as it enforces (I believe) the language of principles that Damascius later uses for the One-All, All-One, and Unified. Westerink-Combès' interpretation as 'moments' tends to imply a modal distinction, but as we will see, Damascius emphasizes a clearly distinct meaning and causal function for the All-One, as causing only distinctions, compared to the One-All, as causing only unity.

εἰ δέ τις ἐθέλοι, ὥσπερ ἐν σκότει ἀφάσσω, ὅμως καὶ ἐν ἐκείνοις κατὰ ἀναλογίαν ταῦτα θεωρεῖν, οὐ κατὰ ἔνδειξιν, ἀλλὰ κρειττόνως ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι δυναμένην ἀλήθειαν, ἀναλογεῖται ἐκεῖνο μὲν τῷ μένοντι αἰτίῳ, τὸ δὲ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ προϊόν πρῶτως τῷ προϊόντι καὶ ἄρχοντι τῆς κυρίως προόδου, τὸ δὲ τρίτον ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τῷ ἐπιστρέφοντι. ἐὰν δὲ αὐτὰ ταῦτα διαστησώμεθα οἷα εἶναι ὑπονοοῦμεν, εἰσόμεθα ὅτι πρέψει αὐτοῖς ἡ ἀναλογία· πλὴν ὅτι καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἤδη ζητητέον μήποτε ἄλλο τὸ μένον παρὰ τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὑποκείμενον ἐν πάντα εἶναι· τοῦτο γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι διωρισμένον. τῶν δὲ μετ' αὐτὸ, τριῶν ὄντων, εἴποι τις ἂν πρῶτον εἶναι τὸ μένον· εἰ γὰρ καὶ ταῦτα παντελῆ καὶ ἀδιόριστον ἕκαστον, ἀλλ' ἤδη μᾶλλον ἂν τι ἐνδείξαιτο· τὸ μὲν κατὰ τὸ μένον ἐνδείξαιτο μᾶλλον, τὸ δὲ κατὰ τὸ προϊόν, τὸ δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἐπιστρεφόμενον.

Just before this passage Damascius denies that the three terms from the intelligible triad—i.e. remaining, procession, and reversion—apply to the One,<sup>114</sup> since they imply differentiation.<sup>115</sup> Thus while respecting that the One produces 'in an unlike mode'—which denies the possibility for literal predication—Damascius here attempts to bridge the gap by permitting analogical predication (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν). By doing so, this enables one to speak of the One as having, or being related to, the principles of remaining, procession, and reversion in the intelligible realm without implicating the One in its undetermined nature.

One may initially be puzzled when Damascius introduces a distinction between κατὰ ἀναλογίαν and κατὰ ἔνδειξιν, where he prefers the former kind of predication which, as he phrases it, is 'in a stronger way than the truth which is able to be indicated' (κρειττόνως ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι δυναμένην ἀλήθειαν).<sup>116</sup> What Damascius may likely mean here is that predication by 'indication' (κατὰ ἔνδειξιν) only points out features that are immediately manifested or made apparent: for instance, the Limit and Unlimited are 'revealed' by God, from the *Philebus*, which Proclus in *Platonic Theology* 111.9 interprets as henads derived from the One.<sup>117</sup> By contrast, Damascius seems to say one cannot do this for the three principles, because they are rather *not* manifested or made clear in

<sup>114</sup> DP I, 128,17–22.

<sup>115</sup> DP I, 127,14 ff. Implicitly this is not apparent when one looks at Proclus: for instance, the henads, which are undifferentiated, fit the position of 'remaining' in relation to the effect they produce (in 'procession' and 'reversion'), which result in differentiation.

<sup>116</sup> Compare the contrast here with Plato, *Laws* XII, 966b1–2, where conceptualizing is contrasted with indication, or demonstration: 'But what if they conceive (ἐννοεῖν) the point, but are unable to indicate (ἐνδείκνυσθαι) it with an account?' (τί δ', ἐννοεῖν μὲν, τὴν δὲ ἔνδειξιν τῷ λόγῳ ἀδυνατεῖν ἐνδείκνυσθαι;).

<sup>117</sup> Proclus, *PT* 111.9, 36,10–15.

the same way. Instead one can only take the trio of terms, ‘remaining’, ‘procession’, and ‘reversion’ as they apply in what is already manifested—i.e. in Intellect—and refer them to the One by analogy, where the One—or entities that exist in unity—cannot be differentiated this way. Damascius also appears to use ἀναλογία similarly to Aristotle’s use of the term, which indicates unity between two terms outside a common genus—as for instance in *Metaphysics* Λ.5, where the term, ‘principle’, is predicated of the three genera of immaterial, unmoved substance; eternal, movable substance; and perishable, movable substance.<sup>118</sup> By saying that the three principles are attributed to the One by ἀναλογία, and not ἔνδειξις, Damascius asserts that a relation exists between the three principles in the intelligible triad as well as principles in the realm of the One. This also underlines the distinction in kind between the One and the intelligible triad: namely, the former subsists as undifferentiated, the latter as differentiated.

Right after our passage, Damascius asks whether the One, or ‘One-All’ (ἐν πάντα), should be identified with the principle of remaining. Damascius then affirms this position and justifies speaking of the One as what ‘remains’ in terms of indication (ἐνδείκνυσθαι):

Yet if indeed one wishes to indicate these [stages] in those principles, that principle as One-All (τὸ ἐν πάντα) suffices as the indication of remaining,<sup>119</sup> insofar as the first which proceeds from the One-All does not remain ‘One-All’, but proceeds from it, while the former principle in no way proceeds since the Ineffable was before it, in relation to which there was nothing to say, nor is it by indication (κατὰ ἔνδειξιν). Thus neither

118 Aristotle, *Met.* Λ.5, 1071a24–b2, esp.: ‘They are in this sense the same, i.e. by analogy (τὸ ἀνάλογον), since matter, form, privation, and the moving cause [are common to all things]; and the causes of substances may be treated as causes of all things in this sense, that when they are removed all things are removed; further, that which is first in respect of completion (ἐντελεχεία) is the cause of all things. But in another sense there are different first causes, viz. all the contraries which are neither stated as classes nor spoken of in several ways; and, further, the matters [of different things are different]’ (trans. Ross, modified). (ὥδι μὲν ταῦτα ἢ τὸ ἀνάλογον, ὅτι ὕλη, εἶδος, στέρησις, τὸ κινεῖν, καὶ ὥδι τὰ τῶν οὐσιῶν αἴτια ὡς αἴτια πάντων, ὅτι ἀναιρεῖται ἀναιρουμένων· ἔτι τὸ πρῶτον ἐντελεχεία· ὥδι δὲ ἕτερα πρῶτα ὅσα τὰ ἐναντία ἃ μήτε ὡς γένη λέγεται μήτε πολλαχῶς λέγεται· καὶ ἔτι αἱ ὕλαι.)

119 Note here that Damascius now considers ἔνδειξις for the attribute of ‘remaining’ for the One, not just ἀναλογία for the earlier case of the *principle* of remaining found in the intelligible triad, where ἔνδειξις now only indicates an attribute compared to ἀναλογία as establishing a unity between two terms in different genera. Damascius uses this form of predication to justify identifying the One with the principle of remaining, which he now calls the One-All (ἐν πάντα).



does anything proceed from it, nor is it then the One-All, while that which does not proceed may be said to remain precisely the latter [*scil.* 'One-All'] according to itself, as it were by analogy (*κατὰ ἀναλογίαν*), since that which is from it may also be said to remain.<sup>120</sup> And since this proceeds from it, while as such it is after it, it will be necessary to place something which remains before that which proceeds from this, since we establish as an axiom that what remains is before that which proceeds.

*DP* I, 129,16–130,3

ἢ καὶ εἰ ταῦτα βούλοιστο τις ἐπ' ἐκείνων ἐνδείκνυσθαι, ἀρκεῖ τὸ ἐν πάντα ἐκείνο πρὸς τὴν τοῦ μένοντος ἐνδειξιν, καθότι καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἀπ' αὐτοῦ προελθόν οὐκ ἔμεινεν αὐτό, ἀλλὰ πρόεισιν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἐκείνο δὲ οὐδαμῶς πρόεισιν, διότι πρὸ αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀπόρρητον ἦν, ἐφ' οὗ οὐδὲν ἦν εἰπεῖν, οὐδὲ κατὰ ἐνδειξιν. οὐδὲ ἄρα πρόεισί τι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, οὐδὲ ἄρα τὸ ἐν πάντα, τὸ δὲ ἀπρόϊτον κατὰ γε αὐτὸ τοῦτο λέγοιτο ἂν μένειν, οἷον κατὰ ἀναλογίαν, ἐπεὶ κἂν τὸ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένειν λέγοιτο. ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ πρόεισιν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καθόσον ἐστὶ μετ' αὐτό, [καθὼς]<sup>121</sup> δεήσει καὶ πρὸ τῆς τούτου προόδου θέσθαι τι μένον, εἴπερ ἀξιούμεν πρὸ τοῦ προϊόντος εἶναι τὸ μένον.

In attempting to see how the One, or what he calls the 'One-All' (*ἐν πάντα*), relates to the principle of remaining, Damascius situates the One between the Ineffable and the principle which proceeds. In one way the Ineffable and the One appear to be the same: neither can be represented in concepts (*ἐννοια*) or are permitted any literal predication, and therefore neither directly implies procession. However Damascius allows *κατὰ ἀναλογίαν* predication for the One, so that while the One does not 'remain' in a literal sense, one can still say that it 'remains' by analogy from a lower principle which actually 'remains'. By contrast, the Ineffable does not allow for any predication—both *κατὰ ἀναλογίαν* and *κατὰ ἐνδειξιν*. By allowing for procession after the One, even if analogically, Damascius considers 'remaining' as a relative term: something 'remains' only inasmuch as it is contrasted with that which proceeds. This again follows from Damascius' description of the One as in 'coordination' (*σύνταξις*) with all things, where the One has its position, as 'remaining', in relation to all things which proceed from (and revert toward) the One. By contrast, the Ineffable is prior to that coordination, and thereby prior to 'remaining'. Damascius' name for the One as 'One-All' also shows how the One is relative to the principle of procession, which he later calls the

120 An alternative translation could be: '... since it may even be called "remaining" from itself'.

121 Following Westerink-Combès' deletion.

'All-One' (πάντα ἓν) to signify both the aspect of plurality in τὰ πάντα and its opposed relation to the 'One-All'.

With these stages from analogy, we should recall the three principles that belong to the 'determined One' from *De Princ.* 1,94–98. The three stages we have seen—between the principles of remaining, procession, and reversion—implicitly correlate with *De Princ.* 1,94–98's three principles: the unity-producer (ἐνοποιόν), plurality-producer (πληθοποιόν), and the mixture (μίξις). This might suggest that the latter three principles are only modes or stages of the One, if we only posit them 'within' the One from the intelligible triad. One could then think that interpretation (a) from earlier should be held: that the undetermined 'One' is only the One as unanalyzed before it becomes 'determined'; i.e. when one posits the three principles κατὰ ἀναλογίαν. This would suggest that the 'undetermined One' is a kind of conceptual genus, as it were: it is only an epistemic distinction compared to the 'determined One'. This implies that the 'undetermined One' does not have a causal role, or implicitly references one of the principles determined, as interpretations (b) and (c) suggested earlier.

However we should consider the Ineffable's position, from our passage above, in relation to the 'undetermined One'. Since Damascius makes the Ineffable prior to the One-All, this would suggest that the Ineffable is simply the 'undetermined One'. One might especially think this if the 'undetermined One' has no causal relation, at least in relation to the three principles that it underlies. However this interpretation does not work, since Damascius describes the undetermined One as being in an opposed relation to determined entities, as cause and effect.<sup>122</sup> This would imply that the undetermined is a cause of what is determined, whereas Damascius in *De Princ.* 1, 129–130, above, explicitly denies this kind of relation for the Ineffable. Option (b), above, is then ruled out, while the implication that the 'undetermined One' is opposed as a cause in relation to its effects suggests that option (a) is also ruled out—which implicitly suggests (c).

One reason why interpretation (c) is to be preferred can be seen when we compare *De Princ.* 1, 127–128, where literal predication is denied, with *De Princ.* 1, 129–130, where κατὰ ἀναλογίαν predication is affirmed. In the first passage (127–128), it is noteworthy that Damascius continually refers to a singular entity when he first asks how differentiation comes to be from the One. It is only when he considers how the One, as undetermined, brings about differentiation that he initially posits two principles of unifying and differentiation. This would correlate with the stages of remaining and procession posited in the

<sup>122</sup> Cf. p. 247–248.

One, later in 129–130, alongside the third stage of reversion—which would implicitly refer to the Unified, i.e. the One's effect. We then see a progression, from the One considered in itself, taken as a whole, before it is considered causally (and κατὰ ἀναλογίαν), as distinguished into two principles which produce the Unified as the third principle.

Here I would venture to suggest that Damascius may be considering the undetermined 'One', and the 'One' as distinguished into the three 'stages', in an analogous way to his causal model: if there is a principle of procession and reversion κατὰ ἀναλογίαν, then, also by analogy, the One 'differentiates' itself from the principle of procession, and in turn both differentiate themselves from the principle of reversion. Although Damascius is emphatic to deny language that imports opposition to the 'realm of the One', his allowance for terms implying opposition κατὰ ἀναλογίαν suggests that he is considering an analogous process of causation like the Unified producing Intellect. In the same way one can consider the transition from the 'undetermined One', both of *De Princ.* 1, 94–98, and above in *De Princ.* 1, 127–128, to the One as the principle of remaining set before the principles of procession (or πληθοποιόν) and reversion (or the Unified) in *De Princ.* 1, 129.

In sum, this would leave us with our option (c) above, where the 'undetermined One' indicates a stage in the One's causality *before* it produces the All-One and the Unified. The undetermined One is then the One-All *before* it becomes distinct by producing the All-One and the Unified.<sup>123</sup> Put this way, Damascius' interpretation of the 'Cause' from the *Philebus* corresponds to the undetermined One before the distinction arises between the principles of remaining and procession, or the One-All and All-One, while the Cause becomes correlated to the Limit, or the ἐνοποιόν when the distinction arises with the other two principles of the Unlimited (i.e. the πληθοποιόν, or All-One) and the Mixed (i.e. the Unified). In the same way these latter three correspond to the principles of remaining, procession, and reversion that Damascius posits in *De Princ.* 1, 129.

### 5.2.3 *Damascius' Assessment of the Iamblichean/Proclean Interpretations of the Limit/Unlimited*

So far we have focused on Damascius' discussion of the One from the first volume of the *De Principiis*, where he gives us the scaffolding for how to understand the One in itself, as undetermined, and as it unfolds itself into the three principles of the One-All, All-One, and the Unified. Here we should consider

<sup>123</sup> Cf. figure in p. 244.

how Damascius' model differs from Proclus and his predecessors. We see this developed in *De Princ.* II and III, where Damascius discusses his predecessors' views and begins to make more straightforward, concrete claims about his understanding of principles in relation to his predecessors.<sup>124</sup> That said, we should look at Damascius' response to Iamblichus and Proclus to see why he thinks Proclus' view of the One as the first principle ultimately does not work, while Iamblichus provides the right number of principles but fails to properly characterize the One's relation to its products: in particular, on Damascius' reading, Iamblichus implicitly re-imports plurality into the One when he makes the Limit and Unlimited a duality below the One.

In his overview of the predecessors in *DP* II, 1–39, one of Damascius' main critiques is that they generally fail to recognize the first principles' undifferentiated mode of existence.<sup>125</sup> In Proclus' case this might be an unfair criticism, from what we have seen in Chapters 2 and 4, since the henads, for instance, are undifferentiated in themselves. Instead they are differentiated only by their respective participants, and in that respect only in the character (ιδιότης) of their unity. Damascius' criticism, however, strikes at one main issue in Proclus with the Limit and Unlimited: the latter are defined as opposed principles, on the one hand, but they are also henads, which are not opposed. Damascius' response will be to employ his framework from *DP* I, 129: both are not differentiated or opposed, with one implying an exclusion of the other, but κατὰ

<sup>124</sup> One may wonder why there is a shift in language between the two volumes (as Westerink-Combès divide them). In *DP* I Damascius primarily focuses on the Ineffable and the One before he reviews his predecessors, such as Iamblichus and Porphyry (*DP* II, 1,5–16), on the same principles in relation to the intelligible triad in *DP* II. One may next wonder why Damascius does not discuss the predecessors in *DP* I, while he does so in *DP* II and therein gives a more concrete explanation of his own principles—the One-All, All-One, and Unified. One possible reason for this may be methodological: where his predecessors posit first principles starting from the level of the intelligible triad—on the level of differentiation—Damascius uses his insights from vol. I, with principles that do not imply differentiation, to critique previous theories and offer a middle ground between the two. At least one reason for *DP* II's more concrete language is that Damascius takes up his investigation from the basis of the intelligible triad, where differentiation happens—and in so doing we are given the foundation to specify the principles over the intelligible triad. Already at the end of *DP* I, Damascius spells out a framework by which he will critique and decide which previous Neoplatonists and other philosophical figures correctly appropriate the principles: namely (1) admitting the unity of principles in the realm of unity, (2) the allowance of κατὰ ἀναλογίαν language, within the confines of (1), for the One (and implicitly other principles), and (3) that the One can be distinguished into three principles of remaining, procession, and reversion, juxtaposed with the One and the principles' mode of existence as undifferentiated.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Van Riel (2002) 209, citing *DP* II, 15,1–35,16 in his n. 44.

ἀναλογίαν they function as distinct principles, and they are only relatively opposed. The difference from Proclus is then an important conceptual clarification, where Proclus' construal of principles like the Limit and Unlimited as opposed suggests differentiation. The main outcome of Damascius' critique is that lower beings which contain 'limit' and 'unlimited' as elements do not participate in two separate principles of Limit-itself and Unlimited-itself, as for Proclus, but they receive these elements from one principle: i.e. the Unified. This reflects Damascius' view that the Limit and Unlimited are joined together at the causal level, through the Unified, since they produce a common effect. The difference between the two principles only becomes apparent at lower levels, when 'limit' and 'unlimited' become differentiated.

This factors into Damascius' assessment and critique of Iamblichus' view of principles,<sup>126</sup> which Damascius describes as having a similar two-fold distinction of principles over the intelligible triad—between (1) a unique, ineffable principle; (2) a principle that embraces all things (πάντα ... περιέχουσιν); and then the two principles, (3a) Limit and (3b) Unlimited, which respectively compose (3c) the Mixed, or Being.<sup>127</sup> Ultimately Damascius favors Iamblichus' number of principles, including Iamblichus' admission of an ineffable principle (1), but takes issue with the characterization of (3a) and (3b) as implying the kind of contradistinction that obtains between elements on the effects level. In Damascius' formulation, both principles do not depend on each other, so they are autonomous in a way that power (δύναμις) is not, as relative to substance (οὐσία); yet they are of the same nature, as 'one-all' (ἐν πάντα).<sup>128</sup> On this basis Damascius responds to Iamblichus' position:

For ourselves, we indeed begin from the one principle<sup>129</sup> of all things (τῶν πάντων), and after the one principle we place two principles according to analogy (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν), since the two series are split from a single fused nature (συμφύσεως), but they are not contradistinguished; rather [the first] is not yet willing to proceed from the Ineffable, but instead is absorbed (καταπινομένην) by it, while [the second] already proceeds, and

126 Cf. our discussion of Iamblichus in p. 55.

127 DP 11, 15,5 ff. See also previously p. 56, where we initially reviewed Damascius' paraphrase of Iamblichus' hierarchy. Cf. figure in p. 57 (with different symbols).

128 DP 11, 15,12–20.

129 In context, Damascius seems to be indicating the Ineffable with μίᾱς ἀρχῆς: the subsequent two principles Damascius references are implicitly the One-All and All-One, while Damascius explicitly references the One as the 'first' of the two principles at the end of the passage.

has its form specified solely in slackening itself (μόνη τῇ χαλάσει),<sup>130</sup> since the proceeding has obtained substance together with it. This is why it has become for everything the cause of any kind of differentiation, just as the other principle is of every entity brought together with its proper causes. As a result, each [principle] belongs to all things, but one to that which brings together all things toward each other, according to both horizontal and vertical [dimensions]<sup>131</sup> (wherefore it is called 'One' according to indication (κατὰ ἔνδειξιν)), and the other [principle] of what is everywhere differentiated and the kind each one is.

DP II, 16,4–16

καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ μιᾶς ἀρχῆς τῶν πάντων ἀρχόμεθα καὶ μετὰ τὴν μίαν τὰς δύο τάττομεν κατὰ ἀναλογίαν, τῆς διττῆς συστοιχίας ἀπὸ μιᾶς συμφύσεως σχιζομένης, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀντιδιαιρουμένας, ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν οὕτω θέλουσαν ἐκ τοῦ ἀπορρήτου προελθεῖν, ἀλλὰ καταπινομένην ὑπ' αὐτοῦ μάλλον, τὴν δὲ ἤδη προϊοῦσαν, καὶ αὐτῇ μόνη τῇ χαλάσει εἰδοποιηθεῖσαν, ὅτι συνουσίωται αὐτῇ τὸ προϊέναι. διὸ καὶ αἰτία πᾶσι γέγονε τοῦ ὅπως οὖν διακρίνεσθαι, ὥσπερ ἡ ἐτέρα ἀρχὴ τοῦ συμπεφυκέναι τοῖς οἰκείοις αἰτίοις· ὥστε πάντων ἐκατέρα, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν τοῦ πάντα συμφύεσθαι πρὸς ἄλληλα, κατὰ τε πλάτος καὶ βάθος (διὸ καλεῖται ἐν κατὰ ἔνδειξιν), ἡ δὲ τοῦ πανταχῶς διακρίνεσθαι καὶ ὅπως οὖν.

The language in this passage should be familiar from DP I, 129: the 'two principles' (implicitly the Limit and Unlimited) are placed after the unique principle κατὰ ἀναλογίαν; and the One identified by indication (κατὰ ἔνδειξιν), which does not yet proceed from the Ineffable, parallels DP I, 129's One as the first principle of remaining and the second principle of procession. Here in DP II, 16, Damascius describes the two principles as a result of a 'split' (σχιζομένης) from the σύμφυσις, or the 'fused nature'. Damascius does not clarify what he means by σύμφυσις, but he likely does not mean (or want to mean) the

130 Although the phrase sounds odd, the idea seems to be that the second principle (analogous to the Unlimited) 'loosens itself' or 'relaxes' itself, like expansion, by becoming differentiated. The dynamic language may reflect its heritage in works like the Chaldaean Oracles. Also compare this language with the *Anonymous Parmenides Commentary's* phrase of the One-Being 'having let itself down' (ὑφειμένον) from the One (Fr. XI1, 15–16); cf. p. 47–48.

131 Cf. discussion of the 'vertical'/'horizontal' difference in p. 129 n.35. Assuming Damascius has the same meaning in mind, I take 'vertical' to mean here entities that belong in the same kind (e.g. monadic Soul, participated 'soul', bodies with the quality of 'soul'), and 'horizontal' to mean entities different in kind (e.g. participated intellect produces participated soul, which in turn produces participated nature).

Ineffable, but rather an intermediate stage between the Ineffable and the two principles. Following the conclusion of our analysis in the previous section, the same dynamic can be seen here between the *σύμφυσις*, insofar as it represents an intermediary between the Ineffable and the resulting two principles, just as the undetermined One in *DP* I, 94–98. Damascius otherwise uses the *σύμφυσις* to emphasize the single nature of the two principles, so that they are not opposed: whereas if they were opposed, they would have separate natures, rather than come from a common *σύμφυσις*. Both principles are then simply ‘the One’ as the cause of all things, while the One’s causality becomes specified with the two ‘series’ that arise for unity and differentiation.

Further on in *DP* II, 16,<sup>132</sup> Damascius claims that both principles do not stand over separate orders but rather both are involved in each order, which implies that the Limit and Unlimited are not separately participated but share the same participants.<sup>133</sup> With Iamblichus, we have seen indications that he takes the Limit and Unlimited to be the first duality after the One,<sup>134</sup> which leads to Damascius’ critique of opposition. Damascius’ characterization also implies a difference from Proclus’ view of the Limit and Unlimited, insofar as the two principles have distinct, separate participants,<sup>135</sup> so that each instance of ‘limit’ in all beings only participates the Limit, and each instance of the ‘unlimited’ only participates the Unlimited. For Damascius, both ‘distinct’ participants ultimately imply each other at the higher levels, such that each instance must participate a principle that implies both Limit and Unlimited together—in other words, the Unified.

The fact that Damascius gives two descriptions for the One, as the *σύμφυσις* before the two series, and as the ‘One’ which remains next to the Ineffable, suggests two things: (1) the former is not straightforwardly reduced to the latter, but (2) only when the One is considered as a cause is it then distinguished

132 *DP* II, 16,16–19: ‘Let no one then say that one is a principle of one set [of things], another of another set [of things], but each of the two [are a principle of] both and also of the Unified before both and in some way from both—the one principle as paternal, the other as really maternal’. (μηδεὶς οὖν λεγέτω τὴν μὲν ἀρχεῖν τοῦ ἐτέρου στίχου, τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἐτέρου, ἀλλ’ ἑκατέραν ἀμφοῖν καὶ τοῦ πρὸ ἀμφοῖν ἡνωμένου πως ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, τὴν μὲν ὡς πατρικὴν, τὴν δὲ ὡς ἀτεχνῶς μητρικὴν.)

133 This also seems to be *contra* Proclus, *ET* Prop. 90, where all true being is said to participate two principles (Limit and Unlimited) and not one (for Damascius, the Unified). See also *DP* II, 27,2–4, where the ‘more and less’, implicitly the two principles here, are perceived ‘in a single unique character’ (ἐν μιᾷ ιδιότητι): cf. Van Riel (2002) 211.

134 Cf. p. 59–60.

135 Cf. the description of the separate orders of ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ in Proclus, *In Parm.* 1119,5–1123,14.



and correlated with the One-All. This is concordant with Damascius' overall two-fold causal framework when considering the One: either separately from its determined effects, or in relation to its determined effects. This becomes a crucial factor for why Damascius critiques Proclus, as we see below.

After reviewing Iamblichus, Damascius considers Proclus' position in *DP* II, 21–22, where Proclus leaves out Iamblichus' ineffable principle and only asserts the One as the first cause over the Limit and Unlimited. Damascius then raises the problem of the One becoming reduced to the Limit in an opposed relation to the Unlimited, i.e. plurality:

If then someone<sup>136</sup> in counting these [arguments] and other such ones, and at the same time withdrawing from the opinion of Iamblichus, supposes that the One is the unique first principle (μίαν ἀρχήν) before the two principles [*scil.* of the Limit and Unlimited], we oppose ourselves to this view, both by bringing forward the things already said, in which both the many (τὰ πολλά) were opposed to the One, and the unlimited and indefinite dyad are forced together into the same thing with the many, just as also the monad and limit go into the same thing with the One, while the One becomes one of the two principles, and at any rate the second of the two is in some way the prior cause of every procession, while the One in some way already brings to light that which remains in beings, by which it is of its nature to be without procession and opposed to differentiation, without which procession does not come about; and as many other arguments someone may infer from the things which have been said in relation to the hypothesis.

*DP* II, 21,25–22,10

εἰ τοίνυν ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τις ὑπολογιζόμενος, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τῆς Ἰαμβλίχου δόξης ἐξιστάμενος, τὸ ἐν ὑποτιθεῖτο μίαν εἶναι ἀρχὴν πρὸ τῶν δυεῖν, ἀπαντησόμεθα πρὸς αὐτόν, τὰ τε εἰρημένα προφέροντες, ἐν οἷς τὰ τε πολλὰ πρὸς τὸ ἐν ἀντέκειτο, καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον καὶ ἡ ἀόριστος δυάς εἰς ταὐτὸν συνευθεῖτο τοῖς πολλοῖς, ὥστε καὶ τὴν μονάδα καὶ τὸ πέρας εἰς ταὐτὸν ἵεναι τῷ ἐνί, ὡς γίνεσθαι τὸ ἐν μίαν τῶν δυεῖν ἀρχῶν, καὶ γε τῆς προόδου πάσης προαιτία πῶς ἐστὶν ἡ δευτέρα τῶν δυεῖν, τὸ δὲ ἐν ἥδη πως ὑποφαίνει τὸ μόνιμον ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν, καθ' ὅσον ἀπρόοδον εἶναι πέφυκεν καὶ ἀντίξουν πρὸς τὴν διάκρισιν, ἥς ἄνευ οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο πρόοδος, καὶ ὅσα ἂν τις ἀπὸ τῶν εἰρημένων ἄλλα συλλογίσαιτο πρὸς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν.

<sup>136</sup> Implicitly Proclus and Syrianus.

Damascius begins his criticism on the basis that the first principle over the opposites—like the *Philebus* Limit and Unlimited, or the ‘one’ and ‘many’—should itself be without the opposites. Before this passage Damascius acknowledges that Proclus also makes his principle ineffable at the same time that it is also ‘one’.<sup>137</sup> Yet in maintaining that the principle is also ‘one’, Damascius claims that this ultimately makes the principle reduced to the ‘one’ that is opposed to the ‘many’ in the form of the Limit and the Unlimited: that is, if the character of the Limit is ‘one’ like the One-itself, then there is no substantial difference between the two—the One ‘becomes’ the Limit. A second factor in the critique is that the One implies remaining in itself, since it does not proceed. At the same time, the Limit is also established as a principle that remains: therefore, what is the difference between the One and the Limit? On Damascius’ reading, Proclus’ One does not, then, transcend the opposition of the ‘one’ and ‘many’ as represented in the Limit and Unlimited.

Yet if we look back to Proclus’ position, one could dispute Damascius’ reading. For instance, in Proclus’ system the One is unparticipated: as such, it transcends the Limit and Unlimited, since they are participated. The Limit and Unlimited’s characters are relative to the participants, whereas the One in itself transcends the relation. Proclus recognizes that the Limit is opposed by its character to the Unlimited, which is why he emphasizes a clear separation between the unparticipated and participated.<sup>138</sup> This is one further reason that the One for Proclus is ineffable, as Damascius also admits, while its unity cannot be reduced to the Limit’s unity. Further in Proclus’ system the One does not anticipate the Limit and the Unlimited, although he admits that the latter are ‘manifestations’ (ἐμφάνσεις) of the One in *PT* III.9, but this does not imply a reciprocal relation. One might think that Damascius, in a certain sense, is reading his causal framework into Proclus’ own framework: on Damascius’ reading, the unparticipated One anticipates the Limit and Unlimited, as in his description of the σύμφυσις that splits into the One-All and All-One.

Yet given this, Damascius indicates a problem which we saw at the end of Chapter 4, wherein Proclus’ One does not account for the Limit and Unlimited becoming distinct after it. If Proclus admits that the One pre-contains the characters that make the Limit and Unlimited distinct, then the One becomes a plurality that requires yet another ‘One’ above it, *ad infinitum*. Damascius thus recognizes that, if the One produces the Limit and Unlimited, the One

<sup>137</sup> *DP* II, 21,3;6–8.

<sup>138</sup> One might also say here that the difficulty of accounting for the henads’ derivation in Proclus is a benefit: for the One is then truly asymmetrical, and therefore not in danger of being reduced to a specific principle like the Limit.

must become differentiated in the process—while the One no longer remains the transcendent principle that underlies the opposition between the Limit and Unlimited. In another way, Damascius is then justified to raise this problem, even with the significant differences his causal framework implies compared to Proclus. We see that Damascius has a way to account for the duality of the Limit and Unlimited after the One, but this is consequent on a principle that guarantees transcendence and underlies this process: i.e. the Ineffable.

We will consider this more in the final Section 5.3, but first we should summarize Damascius' position with the One-All and All-One, particularly how he can define the two principles having opposite functions without themselves becoming opposed in their mode of existence.

#### 5.2.4 *The One Differentiated into the One-All, All-One, Unified*

We may recall that Damascius argues for the One as 'all things' (τὰ πάντα) from the analogous relation that exists between the One, the Unified, and 'all things' as they exist in differentiation. Damascius carefully makes this claim in a way that denies that plurality pre-exists in the One, in the way it does for the Unified. We saw Damascius' argument for this in *De Princ.* I, 89–92, when he denies that the One is the 'anticipation' (πρόληψις) of τὰ πάντα, in the specific sense of pre-containing the distinct kinds and number of causes that emerge after the Unified; at the same time we have also seen him affirm the One as a πρόληψις of τὰ πάντα, since it causes an entity (i.e. the Unified) which has the property of plurality manifested.<sup>139</sup> The two different responses are consequent on the One's internal character being only unity (in this sense πρόληψις is denied), but since it produces plurality it 'anticipates' what comes after it (thus in this other sense πρόληψις is affirmed). We see Damascius distinguish these two senses when he defines the 'first' and 'second' principles as the One-All and All-One, below, which are responsible for producing the 'third' principle of the Unified:

For if it is permitted to advance a definition, the first is the One-All (ἐν πάντα), the second is the All-One (πάντα ἐν). For the second, being 'all things' (πάντα) through itself, is in a certain sense 'one' in the same way through the first, while the first, being 'one' by itself, is in the same way 'all things' (πάντα) inasmuch as it brings forth the second; the third has unity from the first, while it has 'all things' (τὰ πάντα) by the unique character (ιδιότητα) of the second, of the sort that it is made plural according to the latter, and 'one' by the former, and it becomes the first as composed

<sup>139</sup> See e.g. *DP* I, 38,4.

(σύνθετον) and by its being accomplished as the concrete union (ἔνωμα)<sup>140</sup> of all things. And it projects from itself as the Unified, which we equally call Being, whose 'one' is unified by its unique character in the same way that the unique character of the principle which is before it is 'all things' (τὰ πάντα), and the unique character of that which is again more prior is of being that which is before all things. (By consequence, the first is the One-All before all things;) the second, the All-One as all things (τὰ πάντα); and the third, 'all-one', which is derived from the 'one' and from 'all things', as the Unified.

DP 11, 39,11–25

ἔστι γάρ, εἰ θέμις ἀφορίσασθαι, ἡ μὲν πρώτη ἐν πάντα, ἡ δὲ δευτέρα πάντα ἐν αὐτῇ μὲν γάρ, πάντα οὖσα δι' ἑαυτὴν, ὁμῶς διὰ τὴν πρώτην ἐν πῶς ἐστίν, ἐκείνη δέ, ἐν δι' ἑαυτὴν οὖσα, ὁμῶς πάντα ἐστί, καθ' ὅσον τὴν δευτέραν προήγαγεν, ἡ δὲ τρίτη τὸ μὲν ἐν ἔχει ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης, τὰ δὲ πάντα κατὰ τὴν ιδιότητα τῆς δευτέρας, ὥστε πληθῦσθαι μὲν κατὰ ταύτην, ἐνίξασθαι δὲ κατ' ἐκείνην, πρώτην δὲ σύνθετον γενέσθαι καὶ ἔνωμα πάντων ἀποτελεσθῆναι, καὶ τοῦτο ἄφ' ἑαυτῆς προβαλέσθαι τὸ ἡνωμένον, ὃ δὴ καὶ ὄν καλούμεν, οὐ καὶ τὸ ἐν ἡνωμένον ἐστὶ τῇ ιδιότητι, ὥσπερ τῆς πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἀρχῆς τὰ πάντα ἡ ιδιότης, καὶ τῆς ἔτι προτέρας τὸ πρὸ πάντων. \*\*\*<sup>141</sup> καὶ τὸ δεύτερον πάντα ἐν τὰ πάντα, καὶ τὸ τρίτον πάντα ἐν τὸ ἐξ ἑνὸς καὶ πάντων τὸ ἡνωμένον.

Damascius' structure parallels the distinction that he made in *De Princ.* 1, 129, between the three principles of remaining, procession, and reversion, where each is defined in relative terms to the other. Damascius does the same in this passage for the One-All and All-One, where each principle's proper character is unity and plurality, respectively. The One-All is 'plural' since it produces the All-One, while the All-One is 'one' since it is produced by the One-All. One can see Damascius' repeated emphasis on causes and their effects existing in mutually opposed relations, as he does so in, for example, *De Princ.* 1, 127–128 earlier, where the cause anticipates its effect, and the effect in turn mirrors its cause, even though the cause is still prior.

Two things come out from this analysis: first it is interesting that Damascius refers to the Unified as an accomplished (ἀποτελεσθῆναι) principle in relation

140 Given the translation pattern for γνῶσμα (see n. 142 below), 'content of unity' or 'manifestation of unity' would be apt translations. Otherwise I follow Westerink-Combès' choice, 'l'union concrète'.

141 Because the following line starts with, 'and the second ...', Westerink-Combès suggest supplying, (ἐστὶν ἄρα τὸ πρῶτον ἐν πάντα πρὸ πάντων), which I follow here.

to all things, and is a 'concrete unity', or literally 'content of unity' (ἔνωμα).<sup>142</sup> This implies that the Unified is the first manifestation of the 'One' relative to the lower levels, whether from Intellect's perspective or 'ours' at the level of soul. The Unified is then an intermediary between the One and Intellect, which suggests that it is effectively the first henad to come forth from the One, just like the Limit as the first henad for Proclus.<sup>143</sup> It also shows how the Unified, as ἔνωμα, is the result of two prior principles with distinct causal roles, while their effect is in the same entity. And a second, significant point is that Damascius delineates the One-All as 'before all things', and the All-One as 'all things' itself. This fills in Damascius' claim from *DP* I, 3, that the One is 'all things before all things', while here in *DP* II, 39, this means that the One produces the principle of the All-One, as 'all things through itself' (πάντα οὖσα δι' ἐαυτήν).<sup>144</sup> Yet by being 'before' (πρὸ) the All-One, the One-All implies its relation to 'all things', so that it becomes named by its immediate relation with the All-One. In turn, the Unified then brings together 'all things' and unity at once.

<sup>142</sup> Damascius' word, ἔνωμα, is similar to his coined word, γνώσμα, to refer to the 'content of knowledge' that the Intellect is identified with, rather than the γνωστόν, the object of knowledge. It would suggest that the Unified is a similar 'content' of unity that is received in all lower beings, rather than τὸ ἐν simply speaking. On γνώσμα, see p. 137 n.51.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. p. 202 ff. The important difference from Proclus is that the Unified in Damascius is not distinguished from the One as participated to unparticipated, as Proclus' henads are to the One (see p. 137). This implies that the One is, as it were, immanently perceived in the Unified: i.e. there is no sharp separation between one and the other, as there is between Proclus' Limit and the One.

<sup>144</sup> It is also worth noting that Damascius characterizes the All-One as plurality according to its subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν) and character (ιδιότης), while it is 'one' by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν) (*DP* II, 33,4–6). By contrast the One-All is 'one-only' (μόνον ἐν) by its subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν) and character (ιδιότης). Compare with Proclus, for whom the henads are all 'one' by their subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν), including the Unlimited as a henad, even if it is the principle of plurality by its character (ιδιότης). One may then see the contrast here to Damascius, who allows for the All-One (standing for the Unlimited) to be a pure multiplicity by its subsistence, and not just character (ιδιότης)—while it is yet undifferentiated and 'one' as well. Cf. Van Riel (2010) 679. Note also that there is an intriguing description for the All-One's plurality in *DP* II, 33,2–4: 'For plurality conceived without unity is infinitely infinite ...' (τὸ γὰρ ἀνευ τοῦ ἐνὸς πλήθος ἐπεισοῦμενον ἀπειράκις ἄπειρον ...). Compare with Proclus, *ET* Prop. 1, 2,10, where pure plurality as ἀπειράκις ἄπειρον is proved to imply an infinite regress, with the conclusion of the impossibility of entities that are composed from an infinity of parts. Damascius thus gives a 'positive' notion to the phrase, where Proclus gives it a negative, destructive notion. (Special thanks to Antonio Vargas for pointing this out.) But see also *DP* I, 54, 8–9, where Damascius employs the same argument from Proclus' *ET* Prop. 1, against plurality as the first principle, and uses the same phrase (ἀπειράκις ἄπειρα) in the negative connotation.

### 5.2.5 *Summing Up Damascius' Structural Changes*

From what we have seen in this section, Van Riel is correct to note that Damascius 'discovers' a hierarchy of levels, or principles, in the One parallel to that found in Intellect by Iamblichus and Syrianus.<sup>145</sup> What Damascius does for the One follows, in a certain way, Proclus' attribution of an internal triad in the henads that mirrors the intelligible triad.<sup>146</sup> Unlike this model, where Proclus describes the triad as aspects of the henads, Damascius delineates the triad of the One-All, All-One, and the Unified as distinct principles which produce their effect for all things. In this way they are like the three principles of the intelligible triad—Being, Life, Intellect. Thus to characterize the One-All, All-One, and the Unified as 'modes' of the One or 'moments'<sup>147</sup> would be misleading,<sup>148</sup> since they have distinct causal functions in relation to each other, which is represented by their unique characters (ιδιότητες) relative to each other. In this particular respect, Damascius' three principles are analogous to the henads for Proclus, which are only differentiated by unique characters. However unlike Proclus' henads, where their characters correlate only to specific participants, Damascius' principles are correlated with all lower entities and participants;<sup>149</sup> instead, the distinction between the principles arises only in their mutually opposed relation to each other in producing the Unified.

This raises an important question about the relation of the One-All and All-One to Proclus' One. In calling the Unified the first 'concrete unity' (ἔνωμα), Damascius makes the Unified the first participated principle of unity<sup>150</sup>—which was implied in the beginning *De Princ.* 1, 3–4, with the Unified set over

145 Van Riel (2002) 209.

146 Proclus, *ET Prop.* 121: 'Every divine entity has a subsistence which is goodness, and a power which is unitary [in character], and knowledge which is hidden and incomprehensible to all secondary beings alike'. (πάν τὸ θεῖον ὑπαρξιν μὲν ἔχει τὴν ἀγαθότητα, δύναμιν δὲ ἐνιαίαν καὶ γνῶσιν κρύφιον καὶ ἀληπτον πᾶσιν ὁμοῦ τοῖς δευτέροις.) The three attributes of 'subsistence', 'power', and 'knowledge' parallel the same distinction in the causal triad, although with the third term as 'act' (ἐνέργεια). The causal triad is applied in the intelligible world between Being (intelligible), Life (power), and Intellect (act).

147 See e.g. Westerink-Combès' translation in *DP* 1, 129,3, including n. 1 in *DP* 1, 129.

148 In this sense Van Riel (2010) 679's reference to the three principles as 'aspects' should be qualified: 'The subsequent stages of the One ('One-Everything', which is the cause of unity, and 'Everything-One', which is the cause of plurality) are aspects of the One, rather than distinct principles'.

149 And further one must recall Damascius' denial that there is a distinction between the unparticipated and participated at the highest level—in other words between the Unified/Being and the One: cf. p. 149–151.

150 Or in other words the first henad, as we have referred to it earlier.

plurality.<sup>151</sup> This would suggest that the One-All and All-One loosely fit into the role of Proclus' unparticipated One, however with a certain qualification. We concluded in Section 5.2.2<sup>152</sup> that Damascius identifies the 'undetermined One' with the One-All in an analogous way to the causal interaction between the Unified and Intellect: in the process of production, the cause acts on itself and on its effect,<sup>153</sup> and in the same way an analogy holds between the undetermined One becoming the One-All as it produces the All-One and Unified. This suggests that the One, in either sense, does not remain absolutely transcendent in the causal process. By contrast, the One for Proclus remains transcendent, since the henads manage the production of plurality while the One remains unparticipated in the process. Although the One for Damascius does not pre-contain plurality like Proclus' henads, the One still anticipates, even if only in a sense, the All-One and the Unified. As we saw in Chapter 3, we may repeat Sebastian Gertz's conclusion: 'What Damascius is in effect proposing, in a rather radical manner, is that being as a cause does not remain completely transcendent and unchanged in the process of generating intellect, but that it acts on itself in order to become knowable'.<sup>154</sup> Effectively the same issue arises for Damascius' One: when considered as a cause of all things, the One no longer remains transcendent in the generation of subsequent principles. To posit a prior 'One' before the One-All and other principles would not work, since unity becomes related to plurality, as Damascius argued earlier. Consequently Damascius still needs to account for a principle of transcendence which is beyond the One.

We can begin to see why Damascius posits the Ineffable, and why Proclus' characterization of the One does not guarantee the kind of ground that Damascius seeks for the One. In our next section we will see how Damascius argues for the Ineffable as the first principle in light of our discussion on the One. This will then allow us to address some criticisms that have been raised over Damascius positing the Ineffable, as well to consider some difficulties in Damascius' attempt to make the Ineffable, rather than the One, the first principle.

151 See *DP* 1,89, 9–20, where Damascius distinguishes between 'unitary Being' (identified with the Unified) and 'substantial Being', and calls the former the 'third god', directly suggesting that it is a henad. Damascius posits the distinction to show that 'substantial Being', which exists in differentiation (like Being for Proclus), requires a principle which is unitary—in implicit opposition to Proclus' position of two principles over Being, and not one. For Damascius' explicit criticism of Proclus on the latter point, see *DP* 111, 112,4 ff.

152 P. 265.

153 Cf. p. 126–128.

154 Gertz (2016) 492–493.



### 5.3 The Ineffable: Separating Causal Synonymy and the ἀρχή

So far in Section 5.2 we have seen Damascius give a transformed picture of the One as distinguished into three relatively distinct principles (i.e. the One-All, All-One, and the Unified), which is consequent on Damascius' emphasis on the One's causal synonymy with 'all things' (Section 5.1). As we have also seen, Damascius makes his argument in the latter case starting from the *aporia* in *De Princ.* I, 1–2, that the first principle (ἀρχή) is both prior, yet *not* prior, to the effect of 'all things' that it is supposed to explain. In the immediate context of *De Princ.* I, 2–25, and furthermore in the three 'ascents' to the first principle in *De Princ.* I, 26–61, Damascius uses the *aporia* to show the necessity for the Ineffable as the first principle, rather than the One. Our argument has so far shown that its *secondary* purpose is to illustrate the One's causal synonymy with τὰ πάντα. Now we should consider Damascius' primary purpose for the *aporia*, namely why the Ineffable is posited.

One reason for positing a principle beyond the One is that the One pre-contains the traces of opposite characters<sup>155</sup>—namely, the mutual opposition between unity and plurality that unfolds from it, which we saw earlier. One thus faces a paradox: in itself, the One transcends the opposites, yet because opposites are implied in the One, as the cause of opposites, the One cannot be the first principle since it does not transcend them absolutely. One could think that this implies a regress: if the One is not first, then another principle must be posited—but if that principle also implies the effects after it, then the process repeats itself. The analysis would then have to be different for the principle above the One. As it is, Damascius already admits that the One is the first cause, and that as the 'One-All' in relation to the second principle, the 'All-One', it does not derive its subsistence as a principle from anywhere else than itself.<sup>156</sup> In this sense, as an uncaused cause the One blocks an infinite regress from happening. So then the remaining question would be why we still need to worry about the One pre-containing the opposites: apparently Damascius thinks this does not require a higher cause (αἴτιον), at least properly speaking, but it necessitates positing a higher principle (ἀρχή).

<sup>155</sup> *DP* I, 56,8–11: discussed further below.

<sup>156</sup> See e.g. *DP* I, 54,1–55,4, where Damascius shows that the One must be prior to Being, if Being is characterized by plurality and depends on the One being prior to unify its internal elements of unity and plurality. Thus the conclusion at 54,16–17: 'Therefore from itself the One has subsisted as self-complete before Being'. (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἄρα τὸ ἐν αὐτοτελεῖς ὑφίστηκεν πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος.)

As we will see, there are two general interpretations that have been given for the Ineffable: either a subjective reading of the Ineffable, or a reading that suggests the Ineffable is a superfluous principle—what we may call the ‘superfluous reading’.

The subjective reading<sup>157</sup> implies that the Ineffable is analogous to a Kantian-like *noumenon* distinction, where the One is analogous to the subjective *phenomenon*: in other words, when we consider the causality of the ‘principle’, we determine the Ineffable, as it were, in the role of a cause—i.e. as the One. The One may ‘appear’ as the first cause, but we ultimately impose this meaning on the Ineffable, as the absolute first principle. Whereas when we try to determine the absolute principle in itself, ‘beyond’ the One, the soul then turns on itself. This reading would suggest that there is only a linguistic, or conceptual, distinction between the Ineffable and the One.<sup>158</sup> This goes with passages where Damascius emphasizes the linguistic aspect by which the One is distinguished from the Ineffable, since there is no causal procession or distinction between the One and the Ineffable—not even in the restricted sense allowed by *κατὰ ἀναλογίαν* predication that we saw between the One-All, All-One, and the Unified.

The ‘superfluous reading’,<sup>159</sup> on the other hand, accepts that Damascius treats the Ineffable as a ‘real’ principle distinct from the One, but suggests that the Ineffable serves no function or purpose in Damascius’ metaphysics beyond the role that the One has already. This reading suggests that Damascius’ One is functionally like Proclus’ One, inasmuch as it is ineffable and fully transcendent, while yet also a cause.

Ultimately, as will be shown, Damascius’ Ineffable should be understood in a distinct way from these two readings: Damascius gives the Ineffable an

<sup>157</sup> See, for instance, Abhel-Rappe (2010) 46: ‘The point here is that the Ineffable cannot be the subject of a metaphysical argument or the basis of a metaphysical system at all; nor can it be incorporated within or accounted for outside of the causal system that forms the structure of Neoplatonic metaphysics. From the point of view of the Ineffable, no such system exists. From the point of view of metaphysical discourse, the Ineffable is a term that can occupy no fixed place within an ontological scheme, since “it is entirely without a position and can in no way be assigned a position relative to the totality” ([*DP*] II.23, 3–5). He does by all accounts found his own discourse upon the Ineffable, but is, nonetheless, careful to show that this principle is neither a hypothetical construct, a logical consequence of a prior philosophical system, nor is it part of an explanatory apparatus’. I take it from this that Rappe does not interpret the Ineffable as having any ‘causal’ function—or what I call ‘grounding’ function, below, in reference to the One.

<sup>158</sup> The ‘Kantian’ interpretation is taken alongside Damascius’ general theory of knowledge, as in *DP* II, 156–158 (cf. p. 20), insofar as Damascius says we only know the ‘content of knowledge’ (*γνώσμα*) rather than the object itself (*γνωστόν*), and other such passages: see e.g. Cürsgen (2007) 322, 363, and Caluori (2017). Cf. p. 20 n.69.

<sup>159</sup> Discussed below in 5.3.4.

explanatory role as a principle (against the subjectivist reading) insofar as it grounds the One's transcendence (against the superfluous reading), which the One cannot explain by itself. In response to the first reading, the Ineffable does not constitute a part of the 'metaphysical system', in the sense that it is connected with the chain of causes and effects seen in the *Parmenides*' hypotheses. Yet the Ineffable provides the condition for the One's ineffability and transcendence, insofar as these two properties are presupposed, on Damascius' interpretation, in the final deduction of the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis—i.e. where the One is said not to be 'one', and is consequently ineffable. In response to the second reading, while the One transcends its effect as a cause, it does not remain absolutely transcendent in the causal process of plurality—as, by contrast, Proclus' unparticipated One does, when the Limit and Unlimited are derived from the One. Damascius' Ineffable then underlies the causal process, wherein causes are conditioned: in this respect, the Ineffable is functionally similar to Proclus' unparticipated One. The key question will then be how the Ineffable can be such a principle without—paradoxically, at first sight—being a 'cause'.

In what follows, we should review how Damascius considers the Ineffable fitting the role of the principle (ἀρχή) in the way that the One does not for him. This requires going back to the conclusion of the beginning *aporia* in *De Princ.* 1, 1–4, and seeing how Damascius' requirement for the principle's ineffability is connected with his notion of being uncoordinated. While the analysis leans heavily on linguistically distinguishing the One from the Ineffable—which initially supports the 'subjectivist reading'—this can only be understood within the causal structure from the One's derivation of entities, from the Unified downward. This we initially find in Damascius' three 'ascents' or attempted proofs for the first principle in *De Princ.* 1, 26–61, which also rely on this sense of being uncoordinated, which we should also review. In the conclusion we will then see how Damascius considers the Ineffable next to the One: that is, not as another principle over the One, like the One itself, but as a ground for the One. The relation between the Ineffable and the One then fits Damascius' view of causality at the lower levels: that is, the Ineffable and the One are analogous to Damascius' distinction between the Unified in its subsistence—which has no causal relation to Intellect, as undifferentiated—and in its causality—by which the Unified makes itself differentiated as a cause of Intellect.

### 5.3.1 *Distinguishing the Ineffable in Speech*

One may recall from *De Princ.* 1, 4, the claim that duality is found in the One 'if someone were also to say this'—that is, to associate the One with

'all things'. It is noticeable that Damascius does not state that the One simply *is* a duality, but rather that it follows that the One becomes a duality *if* we associate the One with all things. This comes before Damascius concludes that 'the ones who are dividing are ourselves, and it is ourselves'<sup>160</sup> who are doubled concerning its simplicity, and who are yet multiplied'.<sup>161</sup> Damascius' qualification then implies that the One's simplicity does not lead to its duality in itself, but it is only the subject's speaking or saying the One—or the One together with 'all things'—that brings about the duality. In other words, Damascius appears to suggest that if the One's simplicity is not spoken, then we arrive at the first principle; if it is spoken, then another principle must be posited. Only this second scenario triggers Damascius' conclusion that there must be a principle transcending both all things (τὰ πάντα) and the One.

This dialectical consideration<sup>162</sup> is important, since it indicates that Damascius is not considering the Ineffable and the One in equal senses as principles, but instead the boundary that separates the two is rather thin. It already shows that one cannot indicate the Ineffable either by direct reference, like principles which exist in distinction (like Intellect), or by analogy to those principles (like the One-All, All-One, and Unified). This would be similar to our earlier distinction between the 'undetermined One' and the 'determined One': the difference only emerges when we consider the One in its causal aspect, which implies relation to determined entities. However before the One is considered as a cause, it then remains without any determination compared to what is after it. In this context, Damascius ties the Ineffable only with 'our' speaking, or lack of speaking (λέγειν), the principle, which he implicitly relates with the concept (ἔννοια) we have of all things as distinguished between the One, the Unified, and 'all things'-itself. Given Damascius' dialectical approach, one may think that these references to 'the One' could be taken in a purely subjective or nominalist sense, without reference to an external entity, especially if Damascius links the One to our ἔννοια of τὰ πάντα. One might see this in Damascius' shift to 'divining' (μαντεύεται) the Ineffable, since it lies beyond the domain of concepts (ἔννοια) and speaking (λέγειν), while the One

160 Damascius does not specify the subject of 'us'/'ourselves': naturally Soul, or particular souls like 'ours' (truly) qualify, but he may also have in mind Intellect which is also double. Since τὰ πάντα also exists primarily in that state as well, as differentiated, Damascius appears to be thinking of the subject within that specific set.

161 *DP* 1, 4,6–12. Cf. p. 235 n.47.

162 Cf. p. 222 n.7.

and 'all things' are within this latter domain.<sup>163</sup> However as we will later see, Damascius uses the shift to show how the two principles may be indicated, especially when he later contrasts the One's ineffability with the Ineffable-itself, where the latter acts as a 'sanctuary' for the One and is the source for the One's ineffability.<sup>164</sup>

Damascius' emphasis on the distinction from 'our side' seems to give us strong support for the subjectivist reading, which suggests the difference is only descriptive between the Ineffable and the One. This would imply Proclus' reading for the One in his *Parmenides Commentary*, as well as *Platonic Theology* III.8, where the One is also marked out as ineffable in its own being—yet it only indicates an aspect of the One, rather than a distinct principle. In the latter work, Proclus says that the One is not truly 'one' but rather ineffable insofar as it is unparticipated and the cause of henads which are 'one' by their subsistence (ὑπαρξίς)<sup>165</sup> and participated.<sup>166</sup> This follows Proclus' interpretation of the final deduction in the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis, where the negative attributes applied to the One are removed and the One is consequently said to be 'not-one'.<sup>167</sup> For Proclus, the One's ineffability then follows as the conclusion of a series of negations which leads to the final negation of all negations.<sup>168</sup> In this respect, the One's ineffability only indicates the mode of its being, which follows from the dialectic of negations in the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis.

By contrast, Damascius prioritizes ineffability to the One of the first hypothesis. After *De Princ.* I, 4, Damascius appeals to that which is uncoordinated (ἀσύντακτον) as more valued and superior by nature to that which is coordinated.<sup>169</sup> Being uncoordinated is parallel to silence, which is not coordinated in the way speech is with things. One sees this with Damascius' general emphasis on the transcendence of the first principle (ἀρχή), as embodied in the Ineffable, to the degree that it is not to be conceived (ἐννοητέον),

163 *DP* I, 4,13–15: "Therefore our soul 'divines' (μαντεύεται) that, among all things which are conceived in whatever way possible, there is a principle which is beyond all things [and is] uncoordinated in relation to all things'. (μαντεύεται ἄρα ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ τῶν ὁπωσοῦν πάντων ἐπινοουμένων εἶναι ἀρχὴν ἐπέκεινα πάντων ἀσύντακτον πρὸς πάντα.)"

164 Cf. p. 294–295.

165 Proclus, *De Decem Dub.* 63,9–10 (quoted in p. 110–111).

166 Proclus, *PT* III.8, esp. 31,12–17. Cf. Steel (1999) 364. See also earlier, p. 209 n.159.

167 Proclus, *In Parm.* 1096,13–1097,16. Cf. Steel (1999) 364–365.

168 See Vlad (2017), esp. 45–50, which compares Proclus with Damascius on a similar point with avoiding the 'void' or nothing (οὐδέν).

169 *DP* I, 6,16–17.

proclaimed, hymned, or supposed (ὑπονοητέον).<sup>170</sup> As implied in his dialectical consideration, above, Damascius later claims that the One, while ineffable insofar as negations apply to it, is still able to be expressed by negation, as ‘ineffable’.<sup>171</sup> Giving negations, and even negating those negations, in reference to the One still implies a relation, not just from the subject’s end but also from the One’s end. By contrast the Ineffable escapes both affirmations and negations to the degree that neither are spoken, so that even to assert the Ineffable as ‘ineffable’, or as beyond ‘negations’, already implies a qualification: what Damascius considers a περίτροπος, or ‘turning around’, applies in these cases with the Ineffable, insofar as positing a statement, such as that the Ineffable is ‘ineffable’, already refutes itself by its very nature. In this respect the use of self-refuting terminology is helpful to emphasize the principle’s nature as both ineffable and transcendent.<sup>172</sup> Thus, if one looks back to the conclusion of the *aporia* in *De Princ.* 1, 2, the denial of the principle as ‘with’ all things and ‘before’ all things fits similarly with the περίτροπος, insofar as the denial of either path leads ultimately to the Ineffable, just as the περίτροπος does also.

Damascius’ analysis of the language used for the Ineffable gives us some way to isolate it as distinct from the One. Yet all this seems to show is that the subjective reading is still maintained, especially if the distinction is consequent on our thinking, or rather our concepts. However more is involved when we consider the One’s nature in the causal process: if the One objectively implies a certain lack or inadequacy when it begins to cause all lower entities, then this would eventually lead us to the Ineffable, if it remains prior to the One’s causality. Given the nature of the One and the Ineffable, such a linguistic analysis, above, would be necessary on our part to understand and ‘reach’ the Ineffable, or at least to see the necessity of a grounding principle like the Ineffable. This would be one way to address the subjective reading, which we should consider more fully below in Damascius’ three ‘ascents’ (ἀναβάσεις) or proofs which attempt to establish the first principle in *De Princ.* 1, 27–61.

### 5.3.2 *The Three ‘Ascents’ to the First Principle*

At the beginning of *De Princ.* 1, 27, Damascius proposes to show the first principle starting from lower principles, or from the ‘easiest’ things as objects of

170 *DP* 1, 4, 17–18. See also Vlad (2014) for a general treatment of this issue, where she claims that suppression of discourse is instrumental for having a ‘science’ (as it were), and not impossibility, for approaching the Ineffable.

171 *DP* 1, 10, 22–11, 5.

172 Although for objections raised along these lines, see below 5.3.4.

sensation, whereby their dependency on self-sufficient principles, or more perfect principles, eventually leads to the first principle itself.<sup>173</sup> The strategy is similar to that which Proclus uses in *Platonic Theology* II, when he demonstrates that the first principle is beyond being by starting with the lower levels of being—from body to Soul, Intellect, and Being-itself before Proclus concludes that the principle, as the One, transcends Being.<sup>174</sup> In this case, Damascius employs the following criteria for each respective 'ascent' or series of demonstrations: (1) what lacks dependency or need (ἀνενδεές) in relation to what is in need and dependent;<sup>175</sup> (2) what is secondary to that which lacks need (in other words, the inverse relation of [1]);<sup>176</sup> and (3) what is more encompassing (περιεκτικόν) and complete (παντέλειον) among all things.<sup>177</sup> For our purposes, Damascius provides his substantive arguments for the One's subordination to the Ineffable in (1) and (2). In (1) Damascius argues that the One lacks total independence from its effects, while in (2) he argues that the One implies opposites within itself. We should consider the two arguments to see why the One objectively implies a higher principle.

Beginning with (1), Damascius shows the One's superiority over the Unified, or Being, in *De Princ.* 1, 37, where the One is not a duality in itself, like the Unified, or has unity brought in from outside, but is simply 'One-itself'.<sup>178</sup> Because it does not depend on its effects for its being simple and 'one', it is the 'most without need' (ἀνενδεέστατον) among all things and 'most simple' (ἀπλούστατον). At first this leads to Damascius' initial conclusion that the One is a principle, cause, and the absolute first among all things.<sup>179</sup> However if these attributes are posited for the One, this would initially suggest three separate properties, which endanger the One's unity. Perhaps surprisingly, instead of ascribing these three attributes to either our speaking or thinking,<sup>180</sup> Damascius ascribes the attributes to the One κατὰ τὸ ἓν, according to its unity.<sup>181</sup> In one way this solves the potential conflict of plurality, insofar as this denies any actual plurality in the One, but then it leads to Damascius' subsequent concern:

173 *DP* 1, 27,1–10.

174 Proclus, *PT* II.2, 16,22–22,3.

175 *DP* 1, 27,14–15.

176 *DP* 1, 39,15–20.

177 *DP* 1, 57,1–5.

178 *DP* 1, 37,3–10.

179 *DP* 1, 37,10–12: 'Therefore this [*scil.* the One] is the principle of all things, this is the cause, and this is the first among all things without exception'. (τοῦτο ἄρα πάντων ἀρχή, καὶ τοῦτο αἴτιον, καὶ τοῦτο πρῶτον ἀπαξ ἀπάντων.)

180 As Damascius would have back in *DP* 1, 4,6–8.

181 *DP* 1, 36,13–19.



But if these things are true even in this way for the One, it will be in need of those things which are after it, namely according to properties which we add to it in whatever way. For that which is a principle (ἀρχή) is and is called such of the things which are from the principle, and the cause is and is called 'cause' of its effects (αἰτιατῶν), and the first is and is called 'first' of the things which have been ordered after it. Moreover, the simple is such by its superiority over other things, and the strongest by power in relation to ruled things, and both the good, desired, and what preserves of those things which are preserved and which desire. Thus if it is called 'all things' (πάντα), it will be expressed according to the anticipation (κατὰ τὴν πρόληψιν)<sup>182</sup> of all things in it, namely according to the One-itself alone (αὐτό μόνον τὸ ἓν), while in the same way [it will be expressed] as the one cause of all things before all things—not being different, but this very thing by unity (κατὰ τὸ ἓν).

DP I, 37,20–38,7

ἀλλ' εἰ ἀληθὴ καὶ οὕτως ταῦτα ἐπὶ τοῦ ἑνός, ἐνδεές ἂν εἴη καὶ οὕτω τῶν μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ, κατὰ γε ταῦτα ἃ προστίθεμεν αὐτῷ καὶ ὁπωσοῦν· ἢ τε γὰρ ἀρχὴ τῶν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, καὶ τὸ αἷτιον τῶν αἰτιατῶν, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον τῶν μετ' αὐτὸ τεταγμένων ἐστὶ τε καὶ λέγεται, ἔτι δὲ τὸ ἀπλοῦν κατὰ ἄλλων ὑπεροχὴν, καὶ τὸ κράτιστον κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τὰ κρατούμενα δύναμιν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν τε καὶ ἐφετὸν καὶ σωστικὸν τῶν σωζομένων καὶ ἐφιεμένων ἐστὶ· καὶ δὴ πάντα εἰ λέγοιτο, κατὰ τὴν πάντων ἐν αὐτῷ πρόληψιν ῥηθῆσεται τὴν κατ' αὐτὸ γε μόνον τὸ ἓν, ὅμως δὲ πάντων μίαν πρὸ πάντων αἰτίαν, οὐκ ἄλλην οὔσαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτην κατὰ τὸ ἓν.

Damascius' strategy here recalls what we saw in the first horn of the *aporia* in DP I, 1–2: the principle is called such in relation to things of which it is a

<sup>182</sup> Cf. p. 238 n.54. If we recall Sect. 5.1.3 (p. 238–240), Damascius' attribution of πρόληψις to the One here contrasts with DP I, 93, where Damascius denies that the One is a πρόληψις of τὰ πάντα, since this otherwise implies that the One pre-contains the distinct causes that make up τὰ πάντα, which altogether imply plurality. In the context of DP I, 37–38, Damascius seems to use πρόληψις in different, more general sense to affirm the One's dependence on τὰ πάντα as its producer. Here he does not equate the One's πρόληψις with the plurality implied in τὰ πάντα, but instead with dependence on τὰ πάντα. This might still suggest a conflict, but Damascius seems to refine the sense in which the One is, and is not, a πρόληψις: namely, the One does not pre-contain the distinction of causes that are implied in τὰ πάντα, but it still pre-contains τὰ πάντα without that distinction—the sense of 'anticipation' here. This appears to be Damascius' point when he claims that the One is dependent on its effect, τὰ πάντα, but not necessarily in terms of the specific plurality within τὰ πάντα.

principle, and cause of those of which it is a cause, and so on. Here we can see Damascius' idea of being within a *σύνταξις*, or coordinated arrangement, come into play. While in the previous section Damascius mostly discussed this as a problem of language, here Damascius speaks of the One's being: even if the attributes, like 'principle' and 'cause' exist according to the One's unity, they still imply an ontological relation to the effects. This is brought out in the final line when Damascius says that the One is not different from 'all things' after it, but rather that very thing (*ταύτην*) as what is after it.<sup>183</sup> To the degree that the One is 'all things', while differing from them by its mode of being 'by unity' (*κατὰ τὸ ἓν*), this indicates dependence—the criterion that denies that it can be the first principle.<sup>184</sup>

Given Damascius' claim about the One's dependency, if just for being a principle and cause, one would still wonder why this implies that the One is lacking: why not suppose, as Proclus and Plotinus would, that what is 'in need' is only from our side? When Damascius attributes 'principle' and 'cause' to the One in the previous passage, he justifies the claim with the distinction that obtains between cause and effect at the level of all things (*τὰ πάντα*): since the One produces *τὰ πάντα*, the same attributes then recur in it by analogy. With this analogy in mind, Damascius claims that the One has a 'trace in the highest sense of being in need' (*ἐνδείας ἀκρότατον ἔχνος*), which he inversely parallels to matter having the faintest dim reflection of the One.<sup>185</sup> Damascius' use of 'trace' is striking in light of its usage in Plotinus and Proclus, for whom 'trace' otherwise indicates the cause's presence within an effect. Here, Damascius uses 'trace' in the reverse relation, with the effect's presence in the cause. In one sense, the One in itself does not imply being in need, yet in producing effects that imply their being in need in themselves, the One itself implies this need. We find that this results in the following:

183 Compare this language with Plotinus', where the One is also 'all things' before distinction arises in *Enn.* v.3.15. Cf. p. 222–224.

184 To put it another way: because it is the nature of the One to be the cause of 'all things', through its unity, the One's nature would be destroyed without the presence of its effects. One could say, in this sense, that the One depends on, or 'needs', its effects.

185 *DP* I, 38,11–14: 'Thus [the One] even has—if it is permitted to say—a certain trace in the highest sense of being in need, just as inversely matter has a faint echo (*ἀπήχημα*) of that which is without need, according to that which it is, as the faintest reflection of the One'. (*ἔχει τι ἄρα, εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν, καὶ ἐνδείας ἀκρότατον ἔχνος, ὥσπερ ἀνάπαλιν ἡ ὕλη τοῦ ἀνευθεοῦς ἔσχατον ἀπήχημα, κατ' αὐτό γε ὃ ἐστίν, ἐν ἀμυδρότατον.*) Although, as we find later (p. 302–304), Damascius actually thinks prime matter is the last echo of the *Ineffable*, rather than the One, as Proclus would also say.

It even seems that the account possesses a certain overturning (τινὰ περιτροπήν): for in the sense that [the One] is 'one', it is indeed without need (ἀνενδεές) insofar as it has revealed [itself] as a principle both according to what is most without need (ἀνενδεέστατον) and 'one'. But in the same way by which it is 'one', it is also a principle: in the sense that it is 'one', it is without need, while in the sense that it is a principle, it is in need (ἐνδεές). Therefore in the sense that it is without need, it is also in need, but not in the same way: rather, in relation to its being what it is [*scil.* as 'one'], it is without need, while just as it is also what produces the other things (τὰ ἄλλα) and has anticipated them, it is in need. But this is characteristic (ἴδιον) of the One: just as it is each thing according to unity, and therefore it is not each as such, just as the account distinguishes each characteristic spoken, it is rather one-only (ἐν μόνον); and according to this it is both the other things and that which is in need. For how is it both not this [*scil.* being in need] too and this according to unity just like all the other things that proceed from it? For being in need is an aspect of [all things].

DP I, 38,14–39,4<sup>186</sup>

καὶ δοκεῖ μὲν ὁ λόγος ἔχειν τινὰ περιτροπήν· ἡ γὰρ ἓν, καὶ ἀνενδεές, εἵπερ καὶ ἀρχὴ πέφηγε κατὰ τὸ ἀνενδεέστατον καὶ ἓν· ἀλλ' ὅμως ἡ ἓν, καὶ ἀρχή· καὶ ἡ μὲν ἓν, ἀνενδεές, ἡ δὲ ἀρχή, καὶ ἐνδεές· ἡ ἄρα ἀνενδεές, καὶ ἐνδεές, ἀλλ' οὐ κατὰ ταῦτόν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς μὲν τὸ εἶναι ὃ ἐστίν, ἀνενδεές, ὥς δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα παράγον καὶ προειληφός, ἐνδεές. ἴδιον δὲ καὶ τοῦτο τοῦ ἐνός· ὥστε κατὰ τὸ ἐν ἐκότερον, καὶ οὐκ ἄρα ἐκότερον οὕτως ὥς ὁ λόγος μερίζει τὸ ἐκότερον λέγων, ἀλλ' ἐν μόνον, κατὰ δὲ τοῦτο τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ τὸ ἐνδεές. καὶ πῶς γὰρ οὐχὶ καὶ τοῦτο εἴη ἂν κατὰ τὸ ἓν, ὥσπερ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ὅσα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πρόεισιν; τούτων γὰρ τι καὶ τὸ ἐνδεές·

Damascius' argument here is essentially that the One has two features which imply the 'overturning' he mentions: first, its unity does not imply the kind of lack implied at the lower levels, where distinction and division in any sense, even in the Unified, implies being in need; but second, because it produces items which have that lack, it implies that lack implicitly as a cause that precontains its effects. In the latter sense the One is then a πρόληψις unlike, for instance, the Unified,<sup>187</sup> where the character of plurality already exists alongside unity—whereas the One does not have the character of plurality in itself. In this sense the One is not in need, but insofar as it anticipates its effects,

186 Here I borrow some of Westerink-Combès' terms, like 'character' (e.g.) in the last line: τούτων γὰρ τι καὶ τὸ ἐνδεές ('For the *character* of being in need ...').

187 Cf. DP I, 35,14–37,2.

where plurality does result, it implies being in need. Thus the combination of the two attributes for the One ultimately brings about the 'overturning' that Damascius mentions: it is most without need as simply 'one', but because it produces things that imply need, it itself anticipates this need. Damascius' use of the overturning implicitly indicates the Ineffable's character, as we saw earlier, when attributes brought to it result in their overturning. Here Damascius' search for what is absolutely without lack, when brought to the One, leads itself into this overturning when the One is causally related to things that imply need—where then the tension comes into play. Damascius implies this when, after our passage, he says that one should search beyond the One for what is truly without lack—which ultimately results in a principle that dispenses with what is 'most without need' (ἀνενδεέστατον):

Therefore something else should be sought which will have in no way what is in need. But it would be such an entity that one could not say with truth that it is a principle, nor that it is namely that which has been thought most solemn to be called what is most without need (τὸ ἀνενδεέστατον): for this again signifies a superiority and a transcendence over what is in need.

DP 1, 39,5–9

ἄλλο τι ἄρα ζητητέον, ὃ μηδαμῶς ἔξει τὸ ἐνδεές μηδ' ὁπωσισιούνη· εἴη δ' ἂν τοιοῦτον ὃν μηδὲ ὅτι ἀρχὴ ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν, μηδ' αὐτό γε τοῦτο, ὃ σεμνότατον ἔδοξε λέγεσθαι τὸ ἀνενδεέστατον· καὶ τοῦτο γὰρ ὑπεροχὴν σημαίνει καὶ ἐξαίρεσιν τοῦ ἐνδεοῦς.

Here we then find that, when one names what is 'most without need' (ἀνενδεέστατον), an immediate relation is implied to what is in need. Thus if the One is 'most without need' (ἀνενδεέστατον), as a cause it still anticipates and must be correlated with what is in need. This passage implies that one cannot have the ἀνενδεέστατον without being such in relation to what is 'in need' (ἐνδεές). In the case of the 'certain overturning' (τινὰ περιτροπήν) for the One above, it implies the two attributes as both a principle and cause. But if one seeks only what is 'most without need', then a complete overturning occurs: one cannot have the One but a principle above the One that implies neither what is 'most without need' nor its opposite attribute. This finally results in silence and complete unknowing (ἀγνωσία),<sup>188</sup> attributes which once again indicate the Ineffable.

We may see with ascent (1) that Damascius is not saying that just any relation to the One, if only from the subject's side, implies the One's subordination. Damascius is instead staying consistent with his position on the One's causal

188 DP 1, 39,9–14.

synonymy with τὰ πάντα, whereby need which is found in the effects must also apply to the cause as well. Here Damascius gives, at least in some sense, an ontological argument for the One's subordination.

In ascent (2), Damascius builds on his conclusion about the One's combination of attributes, but this time he uses κατὰ μέθεξιν and καθ' ὑπαρξιν terminology to show the One's dependence on a higher principle. Beforehand, Damascius considers whether Being is the first principle, and in showing that the One must be prior, he employs a substantially similar argument to Proclus' *ET* Prop. 5: just as Prop. 5 shows the One's priority to plurality by disproving either its equality with, or posteriority to, plurality, Damascius eliminates the possibility that Being is either prior to the One, or on the same level as the One. Damascius then concludes that Being is posterior to the One by showing that, as unified, Being depends on unity before it, and as a composite (σύνθετον) of Forms without distinction (as in Intellect), it depends on what is most simple—implicitly the One.<sup>189</sup>

When Damascius next considers the One, he begins with the same consideration of simplicity for the One. Here we find his interpretation of the end of the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis, where the negations spoken of the One are denied, including the One's being 'one'.<sup>190</sup> On Damascius' reading, Plato ultimately denies the One 'being one' (τὸ εἶναι ἓν) but not the One-itself.<sup>191</sup> This marks a contrast from the 'removal-itself of the One' (αὐτῇ τῇ ἀναιρέσει τοῦ ἑνός), which leads us directly to the Ineffable, where the One consequently becomes a 'middle term' (μέσου) between ourselves and the Ineffable.<sup>192</sup> Unlike Proclus, for whom the end of the first hypothesis directly implies ineffability,<sup>193</sup> Damascius maintains that the One is only relatively ineffable by the end of the first hypothesis: as marking the beginning of the ensuing hypotheses, the 'One' at the conclusion of the first still remains an identifiable point of reference, even if not 'being one', so it is thus expressible in this sense.<sup>194</sup>

189 As Westerink-Combès note (*DP* 1, 55, n. 2), this aspect of Damascius' argument appears to be original, at least this version is not spelled out explicitly in Proclus.

190 Cf. Plato, *Parm.* 141e11–142a8.

191 *DP* 1, 55,16–17: τὸ γὰρ εἶναι ἓν ἀπέφησεν ἔσχατον, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸ ἓν.

192 *DP* 1, 9,10–18, esp.: '[We say] forthwith [that] Plato, through the middle-term of the One, has brought us in an ineffable way to the Ineffable now set forward beyond the One, namely by the removal-itself of the One, just as in this way by negation of the other [conclusions] he has brought us around to the One'. (ἢ τάχα μὲν ὁ Πλάτων διὰ μέσου τοῦ ἑνός ἀνήγαγεν ἡμᾶς ἀπορρήτως εἰς τὸ νῦν δὴ προκείμενον ἀπορρήτον ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἑνός αὐτῇ γε τῇ ἀναιρέσει τοῦ ἑνός, ὥσπερ τῇ ἀναιρέσει τῶν ἄλλων εἰς τὸ ἓν περιήγαγεν.)

193 E.g. Proclus, *In Parm.* 520,18–521,26.

194 As Steel (1999) 364–367 points out, Damascius exploits a tension in Proclus' thought related to the first hypothesis' conclusion: on the one hand, it indicates the One's

This leads Damascius to conclude that the One is in a certain sense knowable and expressible in terms of negations, while it is ineffable in affirmation.<sup>195</sup> When he affirms that the One has a certain coordination, while also detached as the highest principle, Damascius notes:

In the same way there is much in [the One] which is ineffable,<sup>196</sup> unknowable, uncoordinated, and without position, but with the faint reflection (ἐμφάσεως) of their opposites, while those attributes are better than the latter [*scil.* their opposites]. But those things which are pure of the opposites and what is unmixed pre-exist things which are mixed together. Either those characters which are greater are in the One according to subsistence (καθ' ὑπαρξιν)—and how will the opposites exist together there?—or they are in the One according to participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν), and they come from elsewhere, from the first which is such. Therefore even before the One is what is simply and entirely ineffable, without position, uncoordinated, and inconceivable (ἀνεπινόητον) according to every mode.

DP I, 56,8–16

πολὺ ὅμως ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἄρρητον καὶ ἄγνωστον καὶ ἀσύντακτον καὶ ἄθετον, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τῆς τῶν ἐναντίων ἐμφάσεως, κρείττω δὲ τούτων ἐκεῖνα. τὰ δὲ καθάρὰ τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ πρὸ τῶν συμμιγῶν ἀμιγῇ προϋπάρχει πανταχοῦ. ἢ γὰρ καθ' ὑπαρξιν ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ τὰ κρείττω· καὶ πῶς ἔσται ἐκεῖ καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ὁμοῦ; ἢ κατὰ μέθεξιν, καὶ ἐτέρωθεν ἦκει ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου τοιοῦτου. καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρα τὸ ἀπλῶς καὶ πάντῃ ἄρρητον, ἄθετον, ἀσύντακτον καὶ ἀνεπινόητον κατὰ πάντα τρόπον.

Damascius argues that the One is not entirely beyond the 'opposites'—that is, between being knowable and unknowable, ineffable and expressible,

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ineffability, or more properly the state of our souls once we have concluded the series of negative deductions (cf. Proclus, *In Parm.* 520,18–521,19); on the other hand, the negations are also supposed to be causally generative of their assertions in the second hypothesis. Thus we reach an entity that is at once identifiable, as the causal starting point for the second and subsequent hypotheses—but unidentifiable, as ineffable. One can see Damascius here exploding these two points into separate distinctions: between denying the One 'being one', and the entire removal of the One itself—i.e. the Ineffable.

195 DP I, 56,1–3.

196 It might be significant that Damascius uses the definite article only with τὸ ἄρρητον, while the other attributes (e.g. ἄγνωστον, etc.) do not have the article. This could be particularly reference the principle, the Ineffable.

uncoordinated and coordinated—since it is still qualified in both senses of the dichotomy, just as the One, for instance, is ineffable by affirmation yet expressible by negation. Unlike the first ascent (1) where the One's relation to its effects demonstrated its subordination, here Damascius uses the opposition of certain attributes that pertain to the One. Insofar as he has previously relied on the notion that simplicity is prior to what is composed, Damascius here also relies on the notion that the principle should not have opposites in any sense. Notably Damascius concludes that the One has what are the better attributes 'by participation' (κατὰ μέθεξιν). This is striking if the One is supposed to be the first cause and *participated*, rather than a participant—or rather unparticipated. However the language of participation seems to be used here in a qualified sense, specifically for the attributes of being known/not known, ineffable/expressible, and so on, inasmuch as participation in a literal sense implies separation between entities, while this is not the case at the One's level.<sup>197</sup> We might also contrast this with Damascius' previous argument for the One's priority over the distinction between plurality and unity in the Unified. In this respect the One transcends opposites, in the same way as Proclus' One. Yet in terms of the One being ineffable, unknowable, and uncoordinated, because it is necessarily qualified in this sense, it depends on a prior principle that grants it these attributes without being these at the same time.

This last point seems to imply a paradox: the Ineffable may not be a 'cause' or a 'principle' in itself, but then it implicitly causes attributes found in the One, like ineffability and being uncoordinated. Even if the language is metaphorical and does not implicate the Ineffable in itself, Damascius' point seems to be that the Ineffable as a principle, even if qualified, is needed to explain how the One can have characters like being unknowable and ineffable. The One thus 'participates' properties that it does not always possess: it may remain transcendent *before* it produces all things, but when it causes it no longer maintains the property of being transcendent in an unqualified way. Damascius then preserves the participation model, this time for the One, inasmuch as the One's character as transcendent and ineffable is no longer absolute but contingent on a principle that is *always* transcendent.

The language of 'overturning' (περίτροπος) here becomes a *consequence* of the Ineffable's position, rather than a subjective indication of the Ineffable purely within language: if we are attempting to indicate a principle that is beyond the causal relation to the One, then to go 'beyond' the One necessitates

<sup>197</sup> Cf. p. 149–152.



this 'overturning' for our souls, where the latter mirrors the Ineffable's transcendence over the One and its subordinate effects. This would contextualize Damascius' earlier linguistic analysis for the Ineffable and the One. Here in ascents (1) and (2), Damascius points out an objective problem with the One's causality, insofar as it anticipates its effects. As a consequence, the analysis leads to a principle that language cannot reach, with the Ineffable, however this happens as the conclusion of analyzing the ontological properties of each principle until the One is reached. As a result, the 'subjectivist reading' alone cannot be a satisfactory explanation, and one can see this when Damascius, throughout the rest of *DP* II and III, treats the Ineffable as a principle alongside other principles within his explanatory framework. As we will soon see, Damascius ends up relating the Ineffable to prime matter, so that the Ineffable implicitly explains prime matter, even if it does not have a causal relation in the way the One and the henads have to specified, determined kinds of matter.

### 5.3.3 *The Ineffable as the Grounding Principle of the One*

Since we have concluded from ascents (1) and (2), above, that Damascius treats the Ineffable as a principle of the One's transcendence, we should next look at how Damascius considers the Ineffable as a principle compared to the One. Already this is paradoxical, since he attempts to find a principle that is not a principle—that is, the kind of principle that does not imply causal synonymy with all things. In doing so, he resorts to language that implies a normal principle—namely with causation, or in being participated, and so on—but Damascius attempts to define the 'content' of the Ineffable in such a way that it avoids these issues.

Given this, Damascius' use of causal language at the end of the second ascent (*De Princ.* I, 56) is still initially puzzling: in the earlier I, 5, he denies causality to the Ineffable when he makes the One the 'truest of causes'.<sup>198</sup> Whereas the One and other principles imply the distinction between one unparticipated monad and multiple, participated entities, Damascius explicitly denies that the Ineffable implies this distinction, let alone any kind of participation of the Ineffable.<sup>199</sup> The One's 'participation' in the Ineffable from *De Princ.* I, 56, cannot then refer to this latter framework, but must be in an analogous sense. Likewise the Ineffable's 'production' of ineffability in the One—if one could speak this way—would have to be in a distinct sense than the One's mode of production.

<sup>198</sup> *DP* I, 5,10–13.

<sup>199</sup> *DP* I, 25,18–26,2.

This becomes manifest when Damascius refers to ‘nothingness’ (τὸ οὐδέν) as a defining character of the Ineffable,<sup>200</sup> similarly to the One’s characteristic of negations properly belonging to it. Yet, one may ask, does this imply the non-existence, or lack of subsistence in any sense, of the Ineffable?<sup>201</sup> Straightforwardly the answer is ‘no’: however Damascius posits a distinction, if somewhat paradoxical, between two senses of ‘nothing’. As Proclus distinguishes between a superior and inferior sense of negation—where one sense refers to the privation of a property (the inferior sense), and the other refers to the transcendence of a given, positive property (the superior sense)<sup>202</sup>—Damascius also applies the same two-fold distinction to τὸ οὐδέν:

But that which is most revered must be incomprehensible to every conception and conjecture (ὑπονοίαις), since even in the things here that which always escapes towards what is higher among our conceptions is more honorable than that which is at hand, so that the most honorable would be that which has escaped all our conjectures. But if this is nothing (οὐδέν), let what is nothing be two-fold in meaning: what is greater than unity, and what is below.<sup>203</sup> But if we step into emptiness (κενεμβατούμεν) in saying these things, then the stepping into emptiness is also two-fold in meaning: that which falls out into the Ineffable, and that which falls out into the nothing which in no way exists (τὸ μηδαμῇ μηδαμῶς ὑπάρχον). For the latter is also ineffable, as Plato says, but according to what is inferior, while the former is according to what is greater.

DP I, 7, 20–8, 5

200 On Damascius’ Ineffable as ‘nothing’ in relation to Plotinus and Proclus, see Bréhier (1938) 269–280.

201 Already this is denied for the Ineffable, below, by Damascius’ line: τὸ μηδαμῇ μηδαμῶς ὑπάρχον (DP I, 8, 2–3). This is roughly similar to Proclus’ denial that the One is ‘non-existent’ in this sense.

202 Proclus, *In Parm.* 1073, 2–7 (although Proclus considers a third sense, negation as ‘equal in some way’ to assertion): ‘But since non-being has a number of senses, one superior to being, another which is of the same rank as being, and yet another which is a privation of being, it is clear surely that we will also observe three types of negations: one superior to assertion, another inferior to assertion, and another in some way equally balanced by assertion’. (ἐπειδὴ δὲ πολλαχῶς τὸ μὴ ὄν, τὸ μὲν ὡς κρείττον τοῦ ὄντος, τὸ δὲ ὡς τῷ ὄντι συντατόμενον, τὸ δὲ ὡς στέρησις τοῦ ὄντος, δῆλον δήπουθεν ὅτι τριττὰ καὶ ἀποφάσεων εἶδη θεωρήσομεν, τὸ μὲν ὑπὲρ τὴν κατὰφασιν, τὸ δὲ καταφάσεως ἀπολειπόμενον, τὸ δὲ παριστούμενόν πως πρὸς τὴν κατὰφασιν.) Cf. p. 180 n. 73.

203 Or ‘inferior’—the opposite of ‘transcendent’ (ἐπέκεινα).

τὸ δὲ σεμνότατον ἄληπτον εἶναι δεῖ πάσαις ἐννοίαις τε καὶ ὑπονοίαις, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἐν τοῖς τῇδε τὸ ἀναφεύγον ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸ ἄνω τὰς ἡμετέρας ἐννοίας τιμιώτερον τοῦ προχειροτέρου, ὥστε τιμιώτατον ἂν εἴη τὸ πάσας ἐκπεφευγὸς τὰς ἡμετέρας ὑπονοίας· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐδέν ἐστιν, ἔστω διττὸν τὸ οὐδέν, τὸ μὲν κρεῖττον τοῦ ἐνός, τὸ δὲ ἐπίταδε· εἰ δὲ κενεμβατοῦμεν ταῦτα λέγοντες, διττὸν καὶ τὸ κενεμβατεῖν, τὸ μὲν ἐκπίπτον εἰς τὸ ἄρρητον, τὸ δὲ εἰς τὸ μηδαμῇ μηδαμῶς ὑπάρχον· ἄρρητον μὲν γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο, ὥς φησι Πλάτων, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ χεῖρον, ἐκείνο δὲ κατὰ τὸ κρεῖττον.

Damascius first uses the notion of nothingness as the result of indicating what is 'beyond every conception and conjecture'. Yet in order to show how nothingness can indicate the Ineffable, Damascius says that 'nothing' can refer to (1) what is transcendent, or (2) what is the opposite of transcendent—inferior. The distinction is parallel to a standard one in Proclus (mentioned above) between a superior and inferior sense for negations: either (1) in a transcendent sense (e.g. soul, not being a body, is greater than body), or (2) in a privative sense (as being without form).<sup>204</sup> Proclus notably uses the first sense of negations to indicate productivity on the entity's part, which Damascius also eventually does for the superior sense of 'nothingness' in relation to the Ineffable. In effect Damascius extends Proclus' distinction to include 'nothingness'.

This analysis also comes to include Damascius' phrase of 'stepping into emptiness' (κενεμβατοῦμεν) in two senses. Here one can also see a difference from Proclus with Damascius' characterization: Proclus uses the term strictly in a negative, lower sense in relation to the One in his *Republic Commentary*, when he uses the term for the *Republic* character, Glaucon, who tries to seek out the Good's nature.<sup>205</sup> Proclus then interprets Glaucon's 'stepping into nothingness' (in his interpretation) as the final limit of knowledge for what one can seek in the One, which parallels the way he proceeds through the negations in the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis to the final negation of the negations. By contrast, Damascius treats stepping into the void as the *first* step one must take to understand and come to acknowledge the first principle, rather than the *last* step

204 Proclus, however, does not indicate any such distinction: in fact he implicitly makes 'nothingness' (οὐδέν) the opposite of the One, thus implicitly correlated with what is entirely non-existent (τὸ μηδαμῇ μηδαμῶς ὑπάρχον). See below, n. 206.

205 See e.g. Proclus, *In Remp.* I, 274,3–9, where Proclus interprets Glaucon's surprise that the Good is 'beyond being' (in *Rep.* VI, 509b8–c2) as being like 'stepping into the void' (ὡς κενεμβατοῦντος). Proclus explicitly denies that 'nothingness' correlates to anything beyond non-existence (Damascius' inferior sense), e.g. in *In Tim.* I, 179,4–5. See Vlad (2017) 45–50 which discusses Proclus' view of 'nothingness' (τὸ οὐδέν) in comparison with Damascius.

for Proclus. In this sense it is a 'positive' or first step, rather than a 'negative' or final step as in Proclus, as consequent on that person having grasped the Good first. For Damascius, this 'stepping into emptiness' (κενεμβατούμεν) is then the means by which the Ineffable is grasped, albeit in a transcendent sense. This would contrast with Proclus' approach to 'nothingness', where it is the opposite of the One, as indicating only sense (2) above, what is purely non-existent.<sup>206</sup>

Because Damascius uses a superior use for τὸ οὐδέν as analogous to Proclus' superior use for negations, this suggests that Damascius sees the Ineffable in the role of a principle analogously to the One. Just as negations indicate transcendence over Being for the One, the term, 'nothing', indicates the Ineffable's transcendence over the One, as well as all things, inasmuch as the term may imply no relation where negations imply a negating of *something*. For the Ineffable, we find this elaborated after Damascius' two-fold distinction for τὸ οὐδέν:

If we find a certain need (χρεῖαν) of [the Ineffable], it is the most indispensable need (χρεῖα) of all things as from there, just as all things proceed from an inaccessible sanctuary (ἄδυτον), both from the Ineffable (ἀπορρήτου) and in the most ineffable way. For neither is it just as the One produces plurality (τὰ πολλά), nor as the Unified produces differentiated things, but as the Ineffable ineffably produces all things (τὰ πάντα) in the same way.

DP I, 8,6–11

εἰ δὲ χρεῖαν αὐτοῦ τινα ἐπιζητούμεν, αὕτη ἐστὶν ἢ πάντων ἀναγκαιοτάτη χρεῖα τὸ ἐκεῖθεν, ὥσπερ ἐξ ἀδύτου πάντα προῖέναι, ἕκ τε ἀπορρήτου καὶ τὸν ἀπόρρητον τρόπον· οὔτε γὰρ ὡς ἐν προάγει τὰ πολλά, οὔτε ὡς ἠγνωμένον τὰ διακρινόμενα, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπόρρητον ἀπορρήτως τὰ πάντα ὁμοίως.

In one sense Damascius' move seems to contradict what he claims for the Ineffable: if it is not a cause, and does not imply relation, why say here that the Ineffable 'produces' (προάγει) anything here? As in the previous section, Damascius tries to show how all things ultimately depend on the Ineffable, rather than the One, yet the Ineffable should not have even the limited sense of causality that the One has. Part of the issue might be resolved by the fact

<sup>206</sup> Proclus, *In Parm.* 1097,13–16: 'For if [the principle] is beyond the One, either it is nothing (οὐδέν) or not-one: each is impossible. Therefore the First is the One as in a true way, and the King of all things (πάντων), and the Good'. (εἰ (γάρ) ἐστὶν ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἐνός, ἢ οὐδέν ἐστὶν ἢ οὐχ ἐν· ἐκάτερον δὲ ἄτοπον· τὸ ἄρα πρῶτόν ἐστι τὸ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐν καὶ ὁ πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ τάγαθόν.) Cf. Vlad (2017) 50.

that the principle simply *is* ineffable: in one sense this would not indicate that any production happens—at least in the normal sense. On the other hand, in order to show that the Ineffable is still a principle in some objective sense, Damascius has to resort to causal language as a consequence of referring to the Ineffable as a principle. This also goes with why he says that the One has ineffability ‘by participation’, even though the One in itself does not participate anything else, as an uncaused cause.

Given this, the examples of production show discontinuity between cause and effect: the Unified (as not-differentiated) produces differentiated entities, and the One (as not-plural) produces plurality,<sup>207</sup> and in the same way, the Ineffable (as not-τὰ πάντα) produces τὰ πάντα. In these scenarios, each principle functions as such by not sharing in the beings or entities after it: thus the Ineffable relates to τὰ πάντα as a principle, like the other cases, by not sharing anything with it. In this instance, causal synonymy does not obtain between producer and produced. One can then say that the Ineffable stands as a ‘principle’ of τὰ πάντα without implicating it in ‘all things’ (τὰ πάντα), or being causally synonymous with τὰ πάντα as the One is. Damascius’ conclusion afterward enforces this point, when he repeats the result that ‘we refute ourselves’ (περιτρεπόμεθα) in claiming the Ineffable as a ‘sanctuary’ (ἄδυτον), incomprehensible, and ineffable, and implicitly even saying it is ‘nothing’.<sup>208</sup>

Damascius’ reference to the Ineffable as a ‘sanctuary’ helps to highlight its grounding function for the One. Later in *De Princ.* I, 84, Damascius refers to the One as being in the ‘sanctuary’ of the Ineffable, in order to point out the contrast of the One’s removal from the realm of what can be spoken and known.<sup>209</sup> The One has its power of ineffability and being unknown, then, in virtue of the Ineffable. By implication the One emerges from the Ineffable, as from the ‘sanctuary’, as the first identifiable entity that can be known, or spoken of—as we have already seen from Damascius’ interpretation of the conclusion to the *Parmenides*’ first hypothesis.

To further contextualize how the Ineffable does not fit the standard pattern of principles, where the unparticipated/participated distinction applies, Damascius notes that the Ineffable is not distinguished into such

207 Strikingly the One is *not* the cause, or producer, of τὰ πάντα here, but instead the Ineffable.

208 *DP* I, 8,12–20.

209 *DP* I, 84,13–21, esp. 19–21: ‘For that which is nearest to the inconceivable principle, if it is permitted to say in this way, remains as in the innermost sanctuary of the silence of that [*scil.* the Ineffable]: (ἐγγυτάτω γὰρ ὃν τῆς ἀμηχάνου ἀρχῆς, εἰ θέμις οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ὥσπερ ἐν ἄδύτῳ μένει τῆς σιγῆς ἐκείνης.)

unparticipated and participated entities, as would be the case for the One and the henads:<sup>210</sup>

But if as we said neither ‘this’ nor ‘that’ must be applied to the Ineffable, which we wish to be over the one and the many, neither therefore should that which is before the many be reckoned as something different [from it], and the one by participation which is divided together with the many in another. Therefore it is not participated, nor does it give something of itself to the things from it, nor is every god<sup>211</sup> ineffable before it is one, just as [each] is ‘one’ before being (οὐσία).

DP 1, 25,18–26,2

εἰ δέ, ὡς ἐλέγομεν, ἐκεῖνο ἢ ἐκεῖνα, οὐ προσοιστέον τῷ ἀπορρήτῳ, ὃ γε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὰ πολλὰ βουλόμεθα, οὐδὲ ἄρα τὸ πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἕτερον θετέον, καὶ τὸ ἐν μεθέξει τοῖς πολλοῖς ἕτερον συνδιηρημένον· οὐκ ἄρα μετέχεται, οὐδὲ μεταδίδωσί τι ἑαυτοῦ τοῖς ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ, οὐδὲ πᾶς θεὸς ἀπόρρητος πρότερον ἢ ἓν, ὥσπερ ἓν πρότερον ἢ οὐσία.

In the terms Damascius defines, the Ineffable’s character has no relation or property found on the lower levels—even if we might say that there is a gradation of ineffability between the One, Being, Intellect, and so on.<sup>212</sup> To make a strong claim about this implies importing the causal structure of remaining, procession, and reversion into the Ineffable, which we have seen with Damascius’ predication κατὰ ἀναλογίαν of this structure for the One, considered as a cause, in *De Princ.* 1, 129–130. Even notionally, or by analogy (as for the One), this implies distinction between an unparticipated and participated ‘Ineffable’—all of which results in a relation with τὰ πάντα. In concluding that there is no participation, one should see how Damascius makes the Ineffable prior to the ‘one’ and the ‘many’, which recalls his criticism of Proclus for failing to make the first principle truly prior to the one and the many: in that case, by making the One the first principle, even if it is also ineffable in its character as Damascius concedes, Proclus’ One still results in being reduced to the ‘one’ which is opposed to ‘many’. Damascius’ Ineffable then has the added

210 Although with the *proviso* here that Damascius only sees the unparticipated/participated distinction arising *after* the Unified in progressively differentiated entities, starting from Life and then Intellect downward. Cf. p. 148–151.

211 I.e. each henad: Damascius also holds that the gods are ‘one’, and therefore henads, like Proclus.

212 E.g. DP 1, 25,1–9.

characteristic that it is prior to all opposites—more expansively than just the opposite of ineffable/expressible and knowable/unknowable—in a way that the One is not.<sup>213</sup>

So far we have focused on how Damascius characterizes the Ineffable as a principle, both in itself and in what way it grounds the One. It is clear that Damascius tries to balance a tension for the Ineffable: on the one hand he attempts to make the Ineffable 'do' something as a principle, while by the parameters he sets out, he is forced to speak in a paradoxical manner, since any language that describes this process is 'overturned' (περίτροπος). Even when we get to terms that more closely approximate to the Ineffable's non-relational status—like the Ineffable as 'nothing' (οὐδέν) in the qualified, superior sense—one is still forced to overturn this in language. However Damascius' emphasis on the Ineffable's productivity, even if it is not truly 'productive' like the One, suggests that he attributes a special, virtual sense of being a principle to it.

As we concluded earlier, this would appear to rule out the subjective interpretation, but then we also need to see why Damascius may not be going in the other direction and positing *too many* principles—i.e. the 'superfluous reading'. We will address this in the next section, but at least one observation is worth making here: Damascius' emphasis on the Ineffable's relation to 'all things', from *De Princ.* 1, 8,6–11 above, as analogous to the One's relation to plurality, or the Unified to differentiated beings, hearkens back to the distinction between Being's causal relation to Intellect.<sup>214</sup> In itself as the Unified, Being has no causal relation to Intellect, since it is undifferentiated whereas Intellect is differentiated. Being must then act on itself and become differentiated in becoming a cause of Intellect, and therefore becoming synonymous with its effect. The Ineffable's relation to 'all things' is then analogous to the Unified *before* it produces Intellect: it is only when the One emerges from the Ineffable that the causal relation to 'all things' is immediately established, just like when the Unified acts on itself in causing Intellect. We should bear this in mind when thinking about whether the Ineffable 'explains' anything in Damascius' causal structure.

213 This last observation also recalls the 'undetermined One' in *DP* 1, 94–98, where Damascius portrays it as prior to the opposites that arise in the 'determined One', implicitly between the principle of unity, plurality, and the combination of the two (i.e. the Unified). In this case it is analogous to the Ineffable in transcending opposites, which goes with both being undetermined and being prior. Unlike the Ineffable, as we have earlier seen, Damascius relates the undetermined One to the 'determined' One as a cause—in other words, it indicates the One-All *before* it causes its opposite, the All-One.

214 Cf. 3.1.



### 5.3.4 *The 'Superfluous Reading': Objections to Damascius' Ineffable, and the Ineffable's Role*

One objection over Damascius' Ineffable lies in a comparison with Proclus' system. In a recent chapter discussing the One and first principles in Proclus, Gerd van Riel compares Proclus' view of the One to Damascius' split of the Ineffable from the One and raises a crucial difficulty for Damascius:

Yet there are reasons to believe that, philosophically speaking, Proclus' solution is the stronger one. First, one could wonder what the 'Ineffable' as a principle adds to the analysis. In fact, even though Damascius would avoid this, it tends to reify the Ineffable into being a separate unity, or a 'principle' beyond the One. When looked at from this angle, the contribution delivered by this additional principle is in fact a reinforcement of the problem: instead of safeguarding the Ineffable from determination, one adds the need to determine it as a separate entity. Second, the problem to which this solution is supposed to give an answer will return after all: Damascius' treatise on *Problems and Solutions about the Principles* opens with a discussion of the paradox that the first principle of all things cannot be called a principle since that would co-ordinate it with reality. Calling it 'Ineffable' detaches it from this determination as a principle. But a few pages further, Damascius has to admit that even calling it 'Ineffable' is attributing too much of a determination to it.<sup>215</sup> That is to say, detaching the First from the One opens the way to an infinite regress in which the ineffability of the principle should always lead to dissatisfaction about even calling it 'ineffable'. If that means that one has to posit a principle beyond the one that is discovered to be ineffable, there is no limit to the exercise (the problem will return at every additional level).<sup>216</sup>

The objection can be summarized in two points: first, the Ineffable only repeats the kind of determination that Damascius attempts to deny; and second, if the Ineffable is posed as beyond determination, this leads to an infinite regress, since the Ineffable would be treated like another 'One', as overdetermined, and then an extra principle would have to be posited *ad infinitum*.<sup>217</sup> To the first point, Van Riel brings up an issue we discussed previously about Damascius'

<sup>215</sup> Cf. *DP* 1, 8,12–20.

<sup>216</sup> Van Riel (2017) 76–77.

<sup>217</sup> It is also worth mentioning that Damascius appeals to the One's priority as stopping an infinite regress of causes, within the second ascent in *DP* 1, 54,6 ff.—right before

need to use causal language for the Ineffable. Damascius uses such language in a self-consciously paradoxical way, but he always does so to illustrate what is 'beyond' the One, when the One necessitates an immediate relation with all things—a determination in this sense. Such language for the Ineffable ultimately makes it possible to 'indicate' it without either determining it or even ourselves in relation to it, since by self-refutation—however paradoxical—one is led toward the Ineffable.<sup>218</sup> Ultimately Damascius' qualification that all properties and language implies an 'overturning' (περίτροπος) enables him to use causal language, on the one hand, and to use attributes such as ineffability, without imputing determination either to the Ineffable itself or even to our 'speaking' the Ineffable. Van Riel's charge, then, does not sufficiently account for the nature of Damascius' Ineffable, where the notion of περίτροπος ensures that the Ineffable lies beyond determination, yet also provides the foundation for the One as the first 'determined' principle.

The same can be said for Van Riel's second point, where Damascius' self-refutation argument ensures that there is no further 'step' beyond the Ineffable: once one attempts to assert or negate any character or attribute in relation to the Ineffable, already the subject is self-refuted. As it is, an infinite regress is impossible for arguments that end up in a περίτροπος.<sup>219</sup> By contrast this is not so for the One, where it is expressible in negations, even if it is also ineffable in its mode of being. Even Proclus admits that the One can be expressed and

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Damascius concludes that the Ineffable, rather than the One, must be the first principle. Van Riel does not appear to take this into account in his argument.

218 It may seem paradoxical that a philosophical argument depends on self-refutation—in fact, this should normally worry us. In Damascius, I take it that his use of this strategy must be taken with his two-fold distinction between the 'superior' and privative senses of τὸ οὐδέν. Such self-refutation should be taken like the 'superior' sense: it leads us 'somewhere', but not in a positively identifiable way—which, if so, would otherwise impute the Ineffable in the cause–effect relation. To indicate the Ineffable by self-refutation is, then, no less strange than indicating the One by negations, if we follow Damascius' logic as following on Proclus. On this, see further *DP* 1, 16,19–17,3; cf. Vlad (2017) 62, n. 68.

219 Sextus Empiricus suggests this in *PH* 1, 122,1–123,1: 'For if [someone] makes his assertion absolutely and without proof, he will not be convincing. But if he wants to use a proof, then if he says that the proof is false, he will overturn (περιτρέψει) himself; and if he says that the proof is true, he will be required to give a proof of its being true, and another proof of that (since it too has to be true), and so *ad infinitum*. But it is impossible to establish infinitely many proofs' (trans. Annas/Barnes, modified). (εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἀπλῶς καὶ ἄνευ ἀποδείξεως ποιήσεται τὴν ἀπόφασιν, ἄπιστος ἔσται· εἰ δὲ ἀποδείξει βουλήσεται χρῆσασθαι, εἰ μὲν ψευδῇ λέξει τὴν ἀπόδειξιν εἶναι, ἑαυτὸν περιτρέψει, ἀληθῇ δὲ λέγων εἶναι τὴν ἀπόδειξιν αἰτηθήσεται ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ ἀληθῆ αὐτὴν εἶναι, κακείνης ἄλλην, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὴν ἀληθῆ εἶναι δεῖ, καὶ μέχρις ἀπείρου. ἀδύνατον δὲ ἔστιν ἀπείρους ἀποδείξεις παραστήσαι.)

referred to, while it is ineffable in its being.<sup>220</sup> Yet as we have seen, Damascius exploits an inner tension in the One, which one sees in Proclus' account: how is it ineffable if it is also expressed as the beginning of all things and the first cause? Can one hold one and the same entity in both respects?<sup>221</sup> At least in this sense, Damascius' Ineffable contributes to the analysis of the One by being absolutely ineffable, whereas the One is only relatively so—especially when considering Damascius' causal model for the One. Van Riel's objections are not satisfactory in this specific case, although as we will see below, there is still the question whether Damascius falls prey to the charge of determination when he links matter to the Ineffable.

Jan Opsomer holds a variation of Van Riel's first criticism, while he also raises the more general problem that the Ineffable is ultimately superfluous if the One fulfills the same function as the Ineffable:

Yet [Damascius'] attempt, too, fails. For Damascius has to find some linguistic expression to refer to it (he intentionally explodes rational discourse).<sup>222</sup> When he claims that calling it ineffable does not express anything about it, however, we are in fact back where we were with Proclus. Proclus too is aware of the fact that his first principle should not be called 'one' in the proper sense, as it is not the unity of something (this is already presupposed by the argument in *ET*, for otherwise *to hen* would be just so much in need of plurality as plurality needs *to hen*; they would be 'in each other', as Damascius *Princ.* 1.95.9–10 phrases it). If that is true for Proclus' *hen*, too, an important reason for separating off an even higher 'hyper-unknowable'<sup>223</sup> vanishes into thin air. Finally, Damascius too will have to consider his highest principle as a cause or principle in some minimal sense, for otherwise its (counterfactual) non-existence wouldn't

220 Proclus, *In Parm.* 518,21–25: 'For it is one thing to refer to the One (τὸ εἶναι περὶ τοῦ ἐνός) and another to express something about the One (τὸ εἶναι περὶ τὸ ἐν). The account does not express anything about the One, for it is not definable. So the negative propositions that have been stated do not express anything about the One, but do refer to the One'. (ἄλλο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ εἶναι περὶ τοῦ ἐνός καὶ ἄλλο τὸ εἶναι περὶ τὸ ἐν καὶ γὰρ ὁ λόγος περὶ μὲν τὸ ἐν οὐκ ἔστιν—ἀόριστον γὰρ ἐστὶ—, περὶ δὲ τοῦ ἐνός ἐστὶν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο λεγόντων ἡμῶν τὸ ἄρρητον· ὥστε καὶ αἱ εἰρημέναι ἀποφάσεις οὐκ εἰσὶ περὶ τὸ ἐν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ ἐνός.) This implicitly highlights the tension of Proclus' account from the flip side of not admitting a separate ineffable principle. See next footnote.

221 See e.g. Steel (1999) 364–365: 'In fact [Proclus'] whole position remains somehow ambiguous: there is a first principle beyond the one that still functions as the one of the first hypothesis, it is absolutely ineffable and nevertheless subject to a dialectical analysis'.

222 See *DP* 1, 20,5–22,19. Cf. Combès (1996): 253–254.

223 Cf. *DP* 1, 84,18.

change anything: the highest principle would be absolutely superfluous. No Platonist wants to say that.<sup>224</sup>

Opsomer's first point about linguistic expression is one we have partly addressed with Van Riel's criticism over determining the Ineffable, although here it is worth considering another angle. One might concede Opsomer's critique that Damascius' strictures for the Ineffable are ultimately no different from Proclus' for the One: Damascius would then be unfair to Proclus if, in his critique of Proclus, his account of the Ineffable only amounts to what Proclus already does with the One in its transcendence. Be that as it may, Opsomer's critique still does not factor in the critical difficulty in Proclus' One: namely, how can one and the same entity be completely transcendent and yet sufficiently explain the emergence of unity and plurality from itself as a cause? Indeed this is one of the main issues in any conception of the One, as we have seen: if it is to describe how the contra-distinguished characters of Limit and Unlimited, or One-All and All-One, emerge from it, then how it pre-contains these needs to be expressed in some way—hence the need for the negations applied to the One to imply, at once, their correlate assertions, and for the One to be expressible at *some* level.<sup>225</sup> Damascius shrewdly recognizes this consequence: if we still need recourse to a principle of absolute transcendence at one and the same time as a principle of unity that explains the emergence of all things (τὰ πάντα), then a distinction must be made. The first principle remains truly ineffable and without relation to all things, both Proclus and Damascius recognize, however for Damascius this cannot be the 'One' if construed as the starting point from which 'all things' come to be. Thus, Opsomer's conclusion of Damascius 'separating off an even higher "hyper-unknowable"' may be better re-defined as such: Damascius re-construes Proclus' One as the Ineffable, while delegating the 'One' as a distinct principle from the Ineffable, which allows for a way to explain the emergence of the contra-distinguished characters of unity and plurality.

Yet given this, another issue is how the Ineffable does not fall prey to the same issue or analysis that is applied to the One: as Opsomer points out, 'Damascius too will have to consider his highest principle as a cause or principle in some minimal sense'. On the one hand we have seen Damascius' causal language for the Ineffable bear out this tension, yet we have also seen Damascius' use of 'overturning' (περίτροπος) language to mitigate this side of the tension—which,

<sup>224</sup> Opsomer (2013) 638.

<sup>225</sup> See e.g. Damascius' claim that the One implies in itself the 'reflections' of opposite attributes of being coordinated, sayable, and known in *DP* 1, 56,8–11: cf. p. 289.

however, leads to Opsomer's conclusion that the Ineffable's '(counterfactual) non-existence wouldn't change anything: the highest principle would be absolutely superfluous'. On the one hand we may again recall the superior and inferior senses of 'nothingness' (τὸ οὐδέν), which Damascius uses to attribute to the Ineffable the status of being a principle without implicating it as the principle *of* anything after it: in this sense, Damascius has to embrace an apparent paradox. This does not rule out Opsomer's objection, but it suggests that Damascius attempts to give the Ineffable an explanatory value (ironically) by removing all causal and explanatory language at the same time, as with his invocation of περίτροπος arguments. This, as should now be clear, can only make sense if Damascius' One is not truly transcendent: if the One is only *relatively* transcendent—and in this sense depends on the effects it produces—then it necessitates a principle that is absolutely transcendent (as in ascent [2]).<sup>226</sup> For Damascius, the only way to show a higher principle would be to take away all language that implies such relation, in contrast to Damascius' One where its ineffability and negations, when stated from the level of all things (τὰ πάντα), still imply assertion (κατάφασις).

Both Opsomer's and Van Riel's critiques, however, highlight the tension implied in distinguishing the Ineffable from the One. Given how Damascius often treats the Ineffable as if it were a principle in the same way as the One, one may understandably worry that Damascius ends up replicating Proclus' version of the One, and in this sense positing a further 'One' above the One-itself. And yet, as we saw in Sections 5.1 and 5.2, Damascius' acknowledgement of the nature of the One's causality necessitates distinguishing a principle that is not affected in the causal process as the One is: even in its undetermined state, the One becomes distinguished into the opposed principles of the One-All and All-One in producing the Unified, and thus all things (τὰ πάντα). One can see this as a consequence of Damascius attempting to account for the One's functionality as a cause for all things, but at the expense of positing a principle of absolute transcendence in contrast to a principle of causality—a distinction that Proclus attempts, with difficulty, to maintain in one and the same principle. In this regard, one needs to account for an extra principle in Damascius' framework—albeit, a very qualified sense of 'principle'—to ground the One's transcendence in its causality. It is in this sense that the second, 'superfluous reading' is not tenable.

One potential issue, however, remains. Just as a question was raised about the relation of the One to matter in Proclus, we should consider certain

<sup>226</sup> Cf. p. 288–290.

passages where Damascius makes the Ineffable the principle responsible for prime matter. In his own *Parmenides Commentary*, Damascius reviews Proclus' position on matter's derivation from the One and ends up critiquing Proclus. For Damascius, matter by its nature lacks unity: to assert matter as an effect of the One, as Proclus does,<sup>227</sup> would imply that it has some form of unity.<sup>228</sup> Although Proclus qualifies matter's relation to the One in virtue of the Unlimited—since the Unlimited is defined as relative to the One—Damascius' critical observation holds inasmuch as the Unlimited is itself characterized by unity, and thus *a fortiori* matter would also be so characterized.<sup>229</sup> Damascius concludes that, as the highest produces the lowest, if the first principle is the Ineffable, then matter must be an effect of the Ineffable and reflect the Ineffable's nature. When Damascius demonstrates this, he implicitly refers to the two-fold distinction of 'nothing' (τὸ οὐδέν) that we have mentioned, but interestingly here adds a third distinction which correlates with matter:

[Parmenides] also denies the 'One', namely that matter is 'nothing': but not in the sense of (1) that which in no way exists (τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν),<sup>230</sup> nor that of (2) the Ineffable, but (3) as the ultimate echo of the very first. For 'nothing' (τὸ οὐδέν) has a double meaning: either (1\*) as an empty name (ὄνομα) and reality (πράγμα), if one can say so, or (2\*) as that which by nature, according to its ineffability, escapes the imposition of the One.

*In Parm.* IV, 72,3–8<sup>231</sup>

ἀφαιρεῖ καὶ τὸ ἓν, καὶ ἡ ὕλη οὐδέν· ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν, μηδὲ ὡς ἄρρητον, ἀλλ' ὡς ἔσχατον ἀπήχημα τοῦ πρωτίστου· διττὸν γὰρ τὸ οὐδέν, τὸ μὲν κενὸν ὄνομα καὶ πρᾶγμα, εἰ οἷόν τε εἰπεῖν, τὸ δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἀπόρρητον φύσει ἐκφεύγον καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐνὸς θέσιν.

In the *De Principiis*, Damascius only references the first two senses of 'nothing', while no mention is made of matter or distinction (3). In the passage above,

<sup>227</sup> Cf. 4.2.3.

<sup>228</sup> Damascius, *In Parm.* IV, 68,8–19. Cf. Van Riel (2011) 197; Combès (1977), esp. 118–121. However, compare with Damascius' juxtaposition of matter with the One in *DP* I, 38,11–14, where matter is said to be an echo of the *One* rather than the Ineffable. It is not clear if Damascius still has the same relation in mind, as in the earlier passages, or if he changed his mind between the *De Principiis* and *Parmenides Commentary*.

<sup>229</sup> Van Riel (2011) 195; Proclus, *In Tim.* I, 385,12–14.

<sup>230</sup> Compare with earlier in Damascius, *In Parm.* IV, 8,2–3, where ὑπάρχον rather than ὄν is used: τὸ μηδαμῆ μηδαμῶς ὑπάρχον.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Van Riel (2011) 199–200.

it seems clear that Damascius does not want to claim that matter does not exist, i.e. in a counterfactual way (1),<sup>232</sup> but rather that it lacks unity, at the lowest end of entities, in the way the Ineffable lacks unity at the highest end. Damascius' reformulation of the two-fold distinction with (1\*) and (2\*) tries to capture the three distinctions he makes earlier, with (2\*) implicitly encompassing (2) and (3). Matter as an 'ultimate echo', like the language of 'trace', then implies that it is an effect of the Ineffable. Yet this suggests that the Ineffable performs a causal function—which might prove problematic. To elaborate, if we compare this to the causal language Damascius uses for the Ineffable's relation to the One, one difference here is that the Ineffable only accounts for aspects of the One's nature—as transcendent, as relatively uncoordinated, and so on. Here, Damascius seems to say that matter is *directly* produced by the Ineffable—which would appear to go against Damascius' emphasis that the Ineffable bears no relation or causality to anything after it.

Yet there may be two ways out of this problem: first, to the degree that prime matter is 'nothing' in the sense of (3), it suggests that nothing 'new' is caused or produced by the Ineffable—although not 'nothing' in a counterfactual sense (1)—so that there is no real causality. Second, Damascius defines matter in relation to 'the others' (τὰ ἄλλα) of the *Parmenides*' fifth hypothesis (159b2–160b4), the plural of which indicates 'multiple matters' which are relative to the multiple henads which also bear a reflection of the Ineffable.<sup>233</sup> This implies that matter is first instantiated by the henads, whereas beforehand it only exists as a reflection of the Ineffable. This might solve the problem inasmuch as matter is then truly 'nothing', so qualified, before the henads' activity.

Damascius' answer, however, still preserves the general tension in his approach for the Ineffable: while the Ineffable functions as a principle in relation to matter—albeit virtually, as we saw also between the Ineffable and the One—it is still detached from what comes after it, and thus not a 'cause' in the sense that it would be implicated in the causal process. In other words, the Ineffable remains a 'principle' without being a cause, both in relation to the One and matter.

#### 5.4 Conclusion: Assessing Damascius' Transformation

We should now summarize our results: in Section 5.1, one of the main issues we investigated was why Damascius makes the One contingent on, or related

<sup>232</sup> Although of course, neither would he wish to claim that it 'exists', i.e. as having substantial being in its own right.

<sup>233</sup> Damascius, *In Parm.* IV, 71,7–11. Cf. Van Riel (2011) 201–202.



to, its effect of 'all things' (τὰ πάντα). As we saw there, although he posits, like Proclus, intermediate principles—specifically the Unified—between the One and plurality, Damascius makes the One causally synonymous with 'all things' as its final effect: thus the One must be 'all things' itself if it ultimately produces all things.

In Section 5.2, the consequences of the One's causal synonymy with 'all things' are borne out: we see how Damascius reconsiders the One's causality in relation to itself and in relation to its lower effects as a cause. One finds that, in Damascius' system, the One exists as undetermined before it unfolds itself, in causing the principle of plurality (the All-One), and becomes differentiated as the 'One-All'; both in turn produce a third principle, the Unified, as the principle of the combination of unity and plurality together. Considered within Damascius' causal framework, we find the same two-sided analysis that is used for Being's relation to Intellect, from Chapter 3, applied also to the One's relation to the All-One and the Unified. This suggests a dynamic picture of principles throughout the hierarchy, which hearkens back somewhat to Iamblichus:<sup>234</sup> each cause is contextualized, and 'unfolded', in producing its lower effect, while *ad intra* it maintains its own higher, and relatively non-related, existence in relation to lower beings. By taking into account Proclus' critiques, Damascius is at once careful to make sure that plurality, or differentiation, is not implicated at higher levels—thus addressing Proclus' worries—yet he permits that each principle posterior to the Ineffable implies a 'concentration' and 'unfolding', from *itself*, of all lower entities. In this sense Damascius revives Iamblichus, but fine-tuned with his own response to Proclus.

This implies that transcendence, when we reach the One, cannot be maintained in the same way as it was for Proclus. Thus, the aim of Section 5.3 was to see how Damascius employs the Ineffable as a principle, and why, at least on his reading, it cannot be reduced to a subjectivist interpretation that implies a linguistic difference from the One. The other, opposite danger is that the Ineffable is a superfluous principle: if it does not 'do' anything or have any causal relation to all things, why posit it? The first two sections should help us see why Damascius posits the Ineffable: it ends up being the ground for the One's causality, where the One—while remaining 'one'—becomes *relative* to

<sup>234</sup> An extra factor in the background may be the *Chaldaean Oracles*—a facet we have only barely touched on so far in this study. Stephen Menn (in personal conversation) has hypothesized that the *Oracles*' dynamic structure lies behind Damascius' transformation of Proclus' framework.

the principles it produces, even though it is not directly participated.<sup>235</sup> The Ineffable becomes the one principle in Damascius' hierarchy that 'remains' without becoming contextualized in the causal process of all lower levels.

Comparing all this with Proclus' framework for the One, we should recall the unresolved tension in Proclus' framework with the causal gap between the One and the henads. In Chapter 4, we concluded that one main problem in Proclus' framework was that it does not explain the derivation of the Limit and Unlimited as the first henads below the One: although the One may explain the unity of the two principles, it cannot explain the distinction that arises between the characters (ιδιότητες) of the two.<sup>236</sup> Damascius' model implicitly fills this gap: the One anticipates its opposed character, the All-One, within itself when it produces the principle—and in turn, the One-All, with the All-One, generates the Unified as the first henad. This comes to be only when Damascius allows for the One to anticipate the opposite principles that come after it. To do this, however, implies that Damascius' One can no longer remain absolutely transcendent in the process, in contrast to Proclus. In this respect the Ineffable for Damascius is analogous to Proclus' unparticipated One *only* in the sense that it remains transcendent and uncoordinated in relation to the henads. But crucially unlike Proclus' One, Damascius denies that any characteristic property is causally passed down from the first principle, unlike the case of the One's unity in Proclus, for the reasons we have seen spelled out.

Given the necessity to posit a principle like the Ineffable, one cannot help but feel that a tension remains with Damascius' solution: even if the 'superfluous' reading can be avoided, one may still wonder if treating the Ineffable in the language of a principle alongside the One and other lower principles—especially as Damascius seems to in *De Principiis* II and III<sup>237</sup>—is too close to implicating it in the entities after it, as is the case for the One and other subsequent principles. One might then ask, why can the Ineffable not be construed as a mode of the One's being? For instance, why not imagine that the One has an aspect of itself that 'remains' transcendent and ineffable, while another part of itself becomes coordinated as a cause? Yet by Damascius' logic, we are already bound by the consequence this would bear: we would have to be speaking of another entity as a result of this process.

As a result, the contrast in outcomes between Proclus and Damascius can be spelled out this way: in Proclus, we may achieve a notion of the One as both absolutely transcendent, not implicated by its final effect (plurality), and

<sup>235</sup> And in this sense, functionally like Proclus' unparticipated One.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. p. 216–217.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. p. 266 n.124.

at once a cause, however we lose the ability to explain the generation of the Limit and Unlimited, as distinct henads, after the One. In Damascius, we may achieve a notion of the One as the first *cause*, which explains both the unity and the derivation of the first principle of plurality, but we lose the ability for its absolute transcendence—thus a unique, grounding principle is to be posited, as the Ineffable. In either case, we are bound by a kind of tension that results: either for Proclus, the tension in causality for the first entities after the One, or for Damascius, the tension in accepting silence as the explanatory ‘ground’ of all subsequent causes.

## Conclusion

In our study we have sought to situate Proclus and Damascius within a crucial tension that runs throughout the Neoplatonic tradition: in affirming the existence of a principle that is the first cause of all things, one needs to affirm the principle's transcendence over the effects it produces. Yet as a cause, the principle must also be like the effects it produces. At face value these two aspects seem to conflict with each other: if one emphasizes the principle's transcendence, this risks detaching its causal relation from the effects, while if one emphasizes the principle's causal relation, this implies that the principle is itself characterized by the feature it is supposed to transcend as the first cause. In all the figures we have looked at, especially from Plotinus onward, each attempts to address this tension in the way that the principle is formulated.

As our study has shown, what then makes Proclus and Damascius unique among other Neoplatonists is that they address this tension head on by making the first principle prior in every respect to the plurality which emerges after it—both the One, for Proclus, and the Ineffable, for Damascius. For both Platonists, the principle transcends plurality and any direct causal relation with the effects that come after it, while intermediate principles, like the henads, are responsible for the production of plurality. This is a contrast to the earlier tradition, which attempts to make the principle, in the case of the One, both transcendent and a direct cause of plurality. This results in the notion of the One as simple in itself, but also as pre-containing the character of the plurality which is produced after it. For Proclus and even Damascius, this solution cannot be accepted: if the principle truly transcends its effects, it cannot be causally related, at least directly.

Where we find Proclus and Damascius parting ways is in how each describes the One as a cause in relation to its final effect of plurality. For Proclus, the One's causality does not entail that it is directly related to its final effect—although it produces entities, like the henads, that produce that plurality. This allows for the One to be both transcendent and act as a cause, since its causality does not implicate it in the process of the production of plurality. For Damascius, by contrast, the One's causality implies its final effect of plurality, or all things, even though he accepts Proclus' premise that the first product after the One is also 'one'. The result for Damascius is that the One cannot remain transcendent in the causal process, but becomes correlated with the lower level of the effects that come after it. Thus, Damascius posits a separate principle, the Ineffable, which remains transcendent and is *not* causally related to any of the effects that come after it, in order to ground the One's causality.

So far our study has attempted to work out why and how Damascius makes this latter move, and in turn how Proclus first responds to the tensions of the earlier tradition by construing the One in the way he does. This has involved three steps in our study. First, we looked at the background to Proclus and Damascius with the foundation Plotinus set, and the intermediate Platonists that adopted Plotinus' basic framework for the One (*Chapter 1*), which finally motivates Proclus' position. Second, we analyzed Proclus' and Damascius' causal frameworks (*Chapters 2–3*), which ground the way that each construes the first principle: either as the One for Proclus, or the One and the Ineffable for Damascius. And third, we analyzed Proclus' and Damascius' positions on the One in itself, and whether or not this necessitated a separate principle, as the Ineffable for Damascius (*Chapters 4–5*).

Thus in *Chapter 1*, we investigated Plotinus' framework for the One, and how this framework became employed in his successors—specifically Porphyry and Iamblichus—and how Syrianus marked the essential turn that leads us to Proclus. One key result we saw in Plotinus was how he often frames the One as a paradigmatic cause of Intellect—both in the well-known (as well as controversial) treatise, *Ennead* VI.8, as well as in other parts of the *Enneads*, such as in V.4. One tension in Plotinus' construal is that this characterization seems to suggest that the One is paradigmatic of the plurality found in Intellect: as such, the One must anticipate features that are characterized by plurality, as seen in passages like *Ennead* VI.8.13–21. Even when Plotinus tries to mediate the tension by qualifying his language, he is bound by the problem of causal synonymy for the One: if the One explains perfections found in Being and Intellect, it must embody them to a higher degree in itself. This suggests that the One is the same in kind as the plurality it produces.

It is perhaps this difficulty with language for the One, in comparison with Being and Intellect, that leads Porphyry to find a systematic method of predication for both the One and Intellect/Being. As we have seen, Porphyry (at least in the form of the *Anonymous Commentary*) attempts to articulate the difference between the One and Being as analogous to the relation of an indefinite genus to its species, which preserves the continuity between the One and Being while demarcating the existence of each principle. Insofar as the One is indefinite like the genus, it might escape being implicated by the plurality that comes about at the defined level of Being.

Yet Iamblichus recognizes that the distinction fails to affirm the transcendence of the One, where the One cannot be the same in *kind*, as Porphyry's solution suggests. Iamblichus' response, as we saw, was to separate out different principles—and this led to a distinction between a transcendent, non-causal principle, and the One as the first cause. However like Plotinus, Iamblichus

preserves a two-sided view of the One: as 'one' in relation to all things, but within itself pre-containing paradigmatic features that belong to Being. Iamblichus' higher, ineffable principle thus grounds the One's causality—a feature we find revived in Damascius' framework. But as we saw for Syrianus, in the conclusion of Chapter 1, Iamblichus' position on the One is unsatisfactory: the One's unity should suffice to explain both its causality and transcendence as a principle. Syrianus thus sets the foundation for Proclus' framework by making Iamblichus' ineffable principle the One-alone, as unparticipated, and by re-appropriating Iamblichus' 'One' into a plurality of henads, as participated 'ones'. The important difference between Iamblichus and Syrianus—as we also find in Proclus—is that the One, as unparticipated and transcendent, is affirmed as a cause, since it produces the plurality of henads, and by transitivity produces plurality *through* the henads. Syrianus' innovation, then, compared to Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus is to affirm that the first products after the One are *also* 'one' in themselves, rather than pluralities.

Chapters 2 and 4 thus spelled out Proclus' systematization and elaboration of his master, Syrianus', initial framework. In *Chapter 2*, the main question we addressed was how Proclus comes to justify the distinction between unparticipated and participated causes. This presupposes a distinction between primary and instrumental causes in all cases of productivity: in the case of particular causes, like individual souls, the soul, as existing separately (χωριστῶς), cannot produce its effect in the participating body without implanting an immanent power in its participant. Proclus relies on a principle of intermediate causality, where the primary cause produces an intermediary that directly brings about the effect in the participant. This allows for causes like the soul to bring about their effect immanently within the participant without being reciprocally affected. Proclus generalizes this framework with the distinction between unparticipated and participated causes, where the unparticipated functions as the first cause of a common property found in multiple participants. Participants then receive that common effect directly from their respective, participated causes—like a given living body with its particular soul—and not *directly* from the unparticipated. In this way, the unparticipated brings about its effect across multiple participants without being reciprocally conditioned by the plurality of the participants.

This framework becomes crucial for Proclus to articulate the One as both transcendent and cause, as we find developed in *Chapter 4*: as unparticipated, the One is not reciprocally affected by the plurality of the participants of unity, yet it still exercises causal power over the participants by transitivity, inasmuch as it produces the henads which in turn directly produce beings. However, as the latter half of the chapter shows, there is a difficulty in Proclus'

model: Proclus appears to employ two models of participated causality for the One—namely the henads, and the Limit and Unlimited. While the henads are responsible for the character of unity in each class of participants, the Limit and Unlimited are responsible for the composition of unity and plurality (or power) found in all participants. Although the fact that Proclus has to posit two models would appear to endanger his framework for the unparticipated/participated in the case of the One, the two models, as we concluded, are ultimately reconcilable into one: the Limit and Unlimited are ‘henads’ in the way the other henads are, and they function as paradigmatic of the other henads’ activity in relation to beings, while in themselves they still function as distinct causes explaining the emergence of plurality in Being and all beings. Still, as we saw in the chapter’s conclusion, there is an irresolvable *aporia*: how do the Limit and Unlimited come forth from the One? What individuates their characters *as* Limit and Unlimited? According to the principle of causal synonymy, the cause of the Limit and Unlimited should thus pre-contain the characters of ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ within itself. Yet Proclus denies exactly this of the One: in transcending any relation to plurality, the One can only be responsible for the production of the character of unity, constitutive of the henads (and the Limit and Unlimited *as* henads), rather than the two characters of ‘limit’ and ‘unlimited’ distinguishing the two corresponding principles, which together imply plurality. Consequently Proclus’ One may successfully remain transcendent and separate, and it may explain the emergence of the henads in terms of their unity, but a causal gap remains in the emergence of the Limit and Unlimited from the One.

Thus while Proclus tries maintaining unity of transcendence and causality in the One, Damascius ends up pulling apart these two aspects, as we find in his framework in Chapters 3 and 5. In *Chapter 3*, we saw Damascius appropriate Proclus’ framework and yet raise basic questions about the nature of causality between ontological levels. Being’s production of Intellect, for example, implies a difficulty for the principle of causal synonymy, since Being produces something dissimilar in kind to itself. In solving this difficulty, Damascius posits a radically new take on causality: principles end up contextualizing themselves, and therefore transform themselves in producing entities distinct in kind from themselves. Thus Being becomes synonymous and adopts properties similar to Intellect in producing Intellect. This reflects Damascius’ emphasis that causes exist as such only in relative opposition to their effects, whereas in themselves, *before* they produce anything, one finds no causal relation. As a result, we find that Damascius holds to a dynamic structure of reality, where higher causes exist as ‘concentrated’ in relation to the effects, which are an ‘unfolding’ of the higher cause. Whereas Proclus sees reality as derived episodically from higher



levels—for instance, the henads exist by themselves, as ‘one’-only, before Being and the intelligibles emerge—Damascius sees each level as ‘unfolded’ and ‘concentrated’ altogether—thus the henads, e.g., exist as both ‘one’ and ‘being’ together, while at lower levels of being the two aspects become progressively separated and distinguished.

Damascius’ two-sided distinction between causes *before* and *during* the causal process becomes the foundation for his distinction between the Ineffable and the One, as *Chapter 5* goes on to argue. In the beginning we see how Damascius’ *aporia* in the first pages of the *De Principiis* sets out the dichotomy between the notion of ‘cause’—implying an immediate, opposed relation to its effect—and the notion of ‘principle’—implying priority over the effect, and thus no relation to it. This leads straight into one of Damascius’ central claims that the One is causally synonymous with its final effect, all things (τὰ πάντα). By contrast, Proclus maintains that the One is only a cause of ‘all things’ by transitivity, and not synonymous with ‘all things’. For Damascius, the One’s causal synonymy with all things means that it anticipates its final effect within itself in the causal process. This results in a reorientation of Proclus’ Limit and Unlimited, where they are now internally implied within the One. Thus when the One produces ‘all things’, it becomes distinguished into three principles: the One-All (corresponding to the Limit), the All-One (corresponding to the Unlimited), and the Unified (corresponding to Being in Proclus—but now as the ‘first’ henad emerging from the One). As a consequence of the One contextualizing itself in this way, the One no longer remains transcendent in the causal process, just as Being no longer remains transcendent when it causes Intellect. This leads to Damascius’ argument for the Ineffable as a principle which remains transcendent while the One, as the first cause, produces its subsequent principles. As we concluded, Damascius is not arguing for a subjective distinction between the Ineffable and the One, nor is he repeating the same function or role of transcendence that the One otherwise has. Instead he attempts to maintain the Ineffable’s function as a principle which grounds the One, but without explicitly ascribing causality to it.

One general outcome we can draw from our study is that Damascius’ model solves the causal gap between Proclus’ One and the Limit and Unlimited, since the One anticipates the two principles in itself. On the other hand, Damascius appears to shift the tension from the One to the Ineffable: if the Ineffable in fact ‘does’ something—for instance, act as a principle of transcendence for the One’s ‘relative’ transcendence—does this not yet implicate it? While Damascius exercises great caution to secure the Ineffable’s position, one cannot help but feel that the tension is not quite resolved. Damascius’ solution may follow as a logical response to the difficulty in Proclus’ framework, insofar

as he attempts to give the One more causal 'weight', however at the expense of being fully transcendent. One may still wonder if Proclus' difficulty could be solved in some other way, in spite of the tension, rather than by concluding with the necessity for an ineffable principle which is both the foundation of a metaphysical framework of first principles, and, more specifically, the *condition* for beginning with the One as the first cause.

One corollary to our study, which we only touched on, is that Damascius tends to construe unity as relative to plurality. As we saw in his critique, Damascius thinks that Proclus' solution of the One as the absolute first does not work, since the One ultimately becomes reduced to the unity that is juxtaposed with plurality. Although he affirms the causal priority of the One, Damascius appears to return to an Aristotelian position that unity is correlated with being, rather than prior to being, as Aristotle argues against the Old Academy Platonists. If he actually makes this move, this would be a major shift from nearly all previous Neoplatonists, inasmuch as the One always comes before being, whereas Damascius comes to affirm the co-existence of unity with being. This reflects one area that scholarship has yet to investigate, particularly the use of Aristotle in Damascius' logic and ontology.

Although the Academy in Athens closed under Damascius and Platonism slowly crumbled in its formal school affiliations, it is telling that the later reception of Proclus and other Neoplatonists, as found in the author of the *Liber de Causis* and others, tends to collapse the One into Being for the first principle. Although it is unlikely that Damascius exercised much direct influence after the Academy, one cannot help but wonder if Damascius' arguments for the One's co-relativity with 'all things' and Being precipitates this move by the later traditions. We may at least thank Damascius for revealing an aspect of the One's causality, or at least an aspect that solves a difficulty in Proclus' account, even though Damascius' final solution raises questions of its own. Although Damascius is more known for his obscure, radical position of the Ineffable, Damascius' innovation, as this study has shown, lies in his theory of causality which directly addresses the tension between transcendence and immanence in all metaphysical causality.



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